

SKETCH
MAP OF THE
CITY OF NEWYORK AND VICINITY

showing the sites of, and approaches to the
PARKS SELECTED AND LOCATED BY THE COMMISSION
appointed under Chapter 253, of the LAWS of 1883

Compliance

Lester Branch THE FIRST
Dave & David
Charles & George
The Whisker
Hans & Arnold
Al & the Miller
Sheriff Riddle NO COSTUME

IMPORTANT STATISTICS!

THE POPULATION OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK
INCREASES BY 12 percent every TWENTY YEARS

IF WE TAKE THE POPULUS BETWEEN

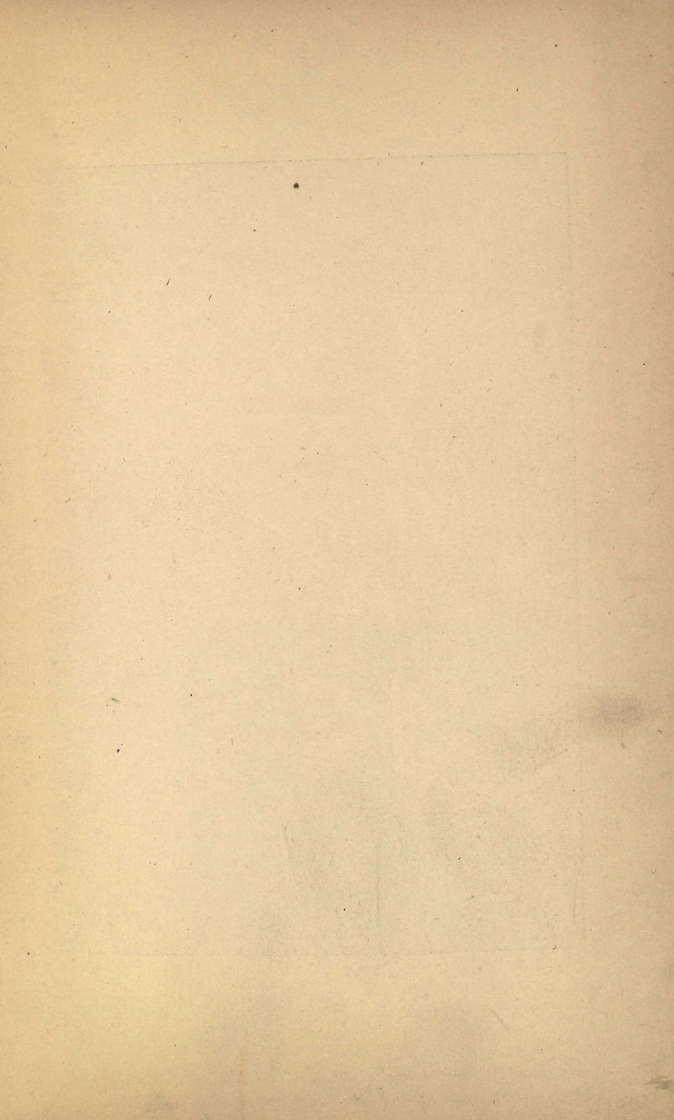
1820	1840	1860	1880
100	112	125	140

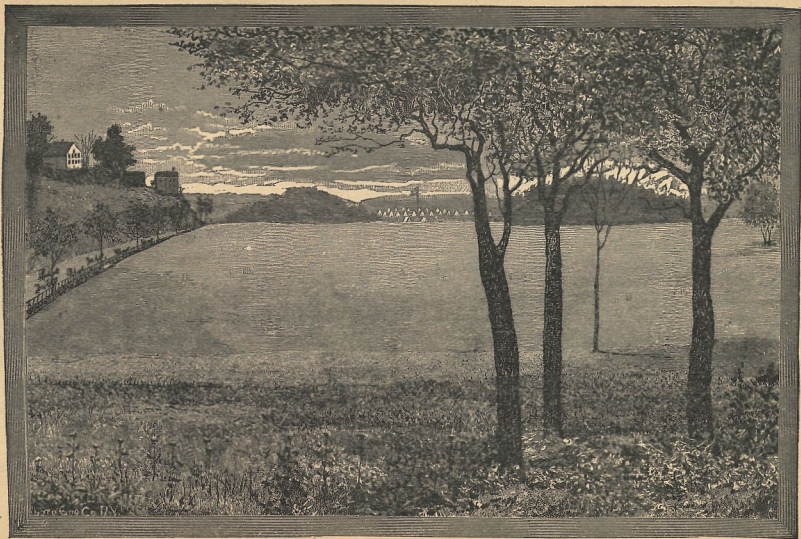
OR BETWEEN THEIR INCREASES

1820	1840	1860	1880
100	112	125	140

THE RESULT IS THE SAME,
IT DOUBLES EVERY SEVENTEEN YEARS.

What will happen to the City of New York?





Van Cortlandt Park—Parade Ground—One Hundred and Twenty Acres.

No. 6.

REPORT

TO THE NEW YORK LEGISLATURE

OF THE

Dup

COMMISSION

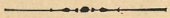
TO

Select and Locate Lands for Public Parks

IN THE

TWENTY-THIRD AND TWENTY-FOURTH WARDS OF THE CITY
OF NEW YORK, AND IN THE VICINITY THEREOF.

*According to the Provisions of the Act of the Legislature of the State of
New York, Chapter 253, passed April 19, 1883.*



NEW YORK:

MARTIN B. BROWN, PRINTER AND STATIONER,
Nos. 49 AND 51 PARK PLACE.

1884

CONTENTS.

	PAGE.
The appointment and work of the Commission.....	7
Importance of information relating to parks.....	8
International, national, State and metropolitan parks.....	9
The public demand for larger breathing-places and play-grounds.....	10
Foresight of De Witt Clinton when Mayor of New York—Park reservations in 1809—A great opportunity lost.....	14
The present park area of New York.....	20
A striking contrast.....	22
Excessive mortality of New York and its prolific causes.....	26
Hygienic effects of parks.....	28
Question of accessibility to suburban pleasure-grounds.....	31
Botanical and zoological gardens.....	38
Necessity for a site for a world's fair.....	40
The census returns and the lessons they teach—The grand future of our metropolis.....	44
Cause of our limited park area.....	54
Effect of Central Park on the value of adjacent land.....	55
Objections to the proposed increase of park area answered.....	57
Parks as a profitable municipal investment—A notable instance—From three thousand dollars to over a million and a quarter....	64
Testimony from New York's official records.....	69
The city makes seventeen millions of dollars and acquires land worth two hundred millions.....	72
Corroborative evidence from other cities.....	74
Mode of Payment—The Parks will more than pay for themselves and leave the title in the city free of cost.....	79
The moral aspect of the question—The remedy for a great evil.....	82

THE SITES SELECTED.

Van Cortlandt park and lake.....	87
A parade ground and rifle range for the National Guard.....	93
Landmarks and traditions of 1776.....	95

	PAGE.
Letters from L. R. Marsh and Major-General Shaler.....	97
The Bronx Park.....	102
Sanitary reasons demand the preservation of the Bronx.....	106
Crotona Park.....	109
St. Mary's Park.....	111
Claremont Park.....	112
Pelham Bay Park.....	113
The parkways.....	121
The map and views of the proposed parks.....	122

AMERICAN PARKS.

Public pleasure-grounds of Chicago.....	127
The public grounds of Washington.....	129
The parks of Boston.....	134
A school of arboriculture the need of the times.....	137
The parks of St. Louis.....	141
The parks of Philadelphia.....	142
The parks of Brooklyn.....	148
The parks of Buffalo.....	155
The parks of Baltimore, San Francisco and Savannah.....	156

THE PARKS OF EUROPE.

Pleasure-grounds of London—Twenty-two thousand acres.....	161
Parks of Paris—One hundred and seventy-two thousand acres.....	168
The parks of Vienna.....	178
The parks of Berlin.....	180
The parks of Dublin.....	183
The parks of Amsterdam.....	184
The parks of Brussels.....	185
 Parks of Japan—Pleasure-grounds of the City of Tokio.....	 189
Conclusion—Area of lands recommended for parks and parkways.....	198
Engineer's Report.....	209

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

MAP SHOWING THE SITES SELECTED FOR THE PROPOSED PARKS, AND
THE TOPOGRAPHICAL CHARACTER OF THE LAND.

VAN CORTLANDT PARK.		PAGE.
Parade Ground.....	Frontispiece.	
Van Cortlandt Mansion—Washington's Headquarters in 1781 and 1783.		11
View of Palisades from Vault Hill.....		17
Northern end of the lake.....		23
Old mill of the Revolution and ancient elms.....		29

THE BRONX PARK.		
On the Heights above the river.....		35
The Cascade.....		41
Sylvan Point.....		51
Delancey's Ancient Pine.....		59
The Woodland Mirror.....		67
The Trout Pool.....		75
The River Glade.....		83
In the Woods.....		91
The Lorillard Mansion.....		99

ST. MARY'S PARK.		
Northeast view.....		107
Southeast view.....		115
Northwest view.....		123
East view.....		131

CROTONA PARK.		
Entrance to Park—North view.....		139
Entrance to Park—South view.....		145
The Grove.....		151
The Dell.....		157

PELHAM BAY PARK.	PAGE.
From Pelham Bridge, looking southerly.....	163
From Prospect Hill, looking westward.....	169
From Hunter's Island, looking south	175
From Bartow's, looking south	181
From Hunter's Island, looking easterly.....	187
East Chester Bay south of Pelham Bridge.....	193
View of Upland.....	199
Picnic Point.....	205
MAP OF WOYENO.....	215

THE APPOINTMENT AND WORK OF THE COMMISSION.

TO THE HONORABLE THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK :

In compliance with the provisions of the act of your Honorable Bodies, passed April 19, 1883, "for the appointment of Commissioners to select and locate lands for Public Parks in the Twenty-third and Twenty-fourth Wards, and the vicinity thereof," the undersigned respectfully report, that immediately after their appointment by the Hon. Franklin Edson, Mayor of the City of New York, and confirmation by the Board of Aldermen on the 1st of May following, they entered upon the performance of the duties assigned.

Aware of the great importance and responsibility of the work with the performance of which they were charged, its effects on the progress and growth of our metropolis, and the sanitary welfare of its people, your Commission took the necessary steps to obtain all the information accessible on the subject of public parks, not alone in the United States, but in the Old World as well, the principal cities of which are celebrated for the extent, the number and beauty of their gardens, their parks, and other public grounds devoted to the physical recreation and social enjoyment of their inhabitants. To obtain the required data, they entered into correspondence with the municipal

authorities of London, Paris, Vienna, Berlin, Dublin, Amsterdam, Brussels, and other European capitals, also with the Governor of Tokio, Japan, and to the prompt courtesy of these officials they are indebted for much of the information embodied in this report. They are also indebted for the facts in relation to the parks of Philadelphia, Chicago, St. Louis, Boston, Buffalo, Baltimore, Brooklyn, Washington, Savannah and San Francisco to the kindness of the officials of those cities.

IMPORTANCE OF INFORMATION RELATING TO PARKS.

The purpose of your Commission, in the collection of this information, was to present in as brief a space as the importance of the subject would permit, such evidence as would show by contrast with other cities the deficiency of New York in the vitally important matter of public pleasure-grounds. The municipal authorities of the great centres of wealth and population in Europe have justly regarded this subject as deserving of their special consideration, and viewing it from the highest standpoint as affecting not only the physical well-being of the people, but their moral and social welfare, they have made the most liberal provision in the extent of land devoted to their use and for its proper management and maintenance.

A new interest has been imparted to the subject by the movement inaugurated a little more than two years ago by the New York Park Association, composed of a number of public-spirited citizens, whose attention, having been called to this deficiency, organized a society for an increase in the number and extent of public pleasure grounds of the metropolis. In this movement they have been encouraged by the approval which they have received from all sides, and particularly by the cordial support so generously

given by the press. The whole country has, indeed, manifested a warm and active interest in the liberal appropriation of suitable tracts of land for the recreation and health of the people, and for the cultivation of the public taste.

INTERNATIONAL, NATIONAL, STATE AND METROPOLITAN PARKS.

The United States and Canada have united in the formation of an International Park at Niagara, thus inaugurating a new era in the history of nations. Our Federal Government has reserved as pleasure domains for the people two tracts of magnificent extent and grandeur unsurpassed, the Yosemite and the Yellowstone. The State of New York is to be sponsor for a State park, imposing, beautiful, unprecedented, embracing the multitudinous summits of the Adirondacks and an area of vast extent. There can be no doubt that these wonderlands will, within a few years, when they shall have been enclosed, adorned, interpenetrated with roads and policed, become the attractive resorts of visitors from every part of the civilized world. It remains for the City of New York to do its part in this great and most useful movement. Indeed the subject for the first time rises into such importance as to assume a place in history, and in a recent work of uncommon merit,* which enumerates the progress of America for the last hundred years and forecasts its glorious future, it is said: "When that city (New York) had outgrown the ideas of its inhabitants of the first half of the present century, the necessity of a large park demanded serious attention, and before it became too late a tract of 864 acres was reserved in the *then* upper portion of the city and secured, which not long afterward was laid out and embellished with taste and beauty, and became the chief attraction of the com-

mercial capital of the western world. The result far exceeded the expectations or even the hopes of its projectors, and it led to other and broader plans. At length, when the bounds of the city were vastly enlarged by the annexation of a broad territory toward the North—the only direction in which it could expand, being restricted by the East river and the lordly Hudson—our leading citizens united in a park association to promote the acquisition of a large area for one or more public pleasure-grounds which would correspond with the wants of a city to whose growth no possible limits during one or two hundred years could be assigned within some millions of inhabitants.”

With such a future, with such possibilities, with almost unlimited resources at its command, with a territory no longer pent up between narrow bounds, with lands whose varied and picturesque attractions of forest, meadow, hill, glen, rock and lake and stream are unsurpassed, New York possesses, in her newly annexed territory, opportunities for the creation of parks unequalled by any other city in the world. This much can in justice be said by your Commission, after a thorough examination and inspection of that section of the city bounded on the south by the Harlem river, on the east by the Bronx and the region on the Sound which, it seems probable, will ere long be added to the city, on the west by the Hudson, and on the north by the County of Westchester. To this portion of their report more attention and space is given hereafter.

THE PUBLIC DEMAND FOR LARGER BREATHING-PLACES AND PLAYGROUNDS.

Having effected their organization by the election of their officers, and the appointment of Gen. J. C. Lane as surveyor, the Commission announced through the daily press that public meetings would be held, at which ample



Van Cortlandt Park—Washington's Headquarters in 1781 and 1783.

opportunity would be given for a hearing to all who desired to present their views or to offer suggestions in relation to the proposed extension of the park area of the city, the location of sites, the recommendation of particular tracts of land and such other considerations as properly belonged to the question before the Commission. Several such meetings were held in the City Hall, and correspondence was freely invited from parties interested in the subject. Of some fifty speakers who addressed your Commission, not one expressed himself in opposition to the general proposition; but on the contrary, all were in favor of the enlargement of the area of the parks of the city, the only point of difference being as to the selection of the land. Local interests demanded parks in particular sections, and while the majority evidently regarded the subject from a metropolitan standpoint, favoring two or more large parks, others advocated the distribution of the proposed increase in the form of many and smaller parks or squares. Your Commission gave to these divergent and conflicting views impartial consideration, and while they felt that they were acting for and represented the city at large, they considered that they were also bound to give due weight to the arguments presented by the representatives of the different localities. In reaching a conclusion as to location and area they have been governed wholly by questions of economy, suitability and accessibility. In the selection of sites for the larger parks, the necessity of making ample provision for the needs of our National Guard has been recognized and taken into account. The conclusions which have been reached on this important point they feel satisfied, for the reasons set forth in another portion of this report, will meet with the approval of the public and the favorable action of your Honorable Bodies.

FORESIGHT OF DE WITT CLINTON WHEN MAYOR OF NEW
YORK—PARK RESERVATIONS IN 1809—A GRAND
OPPORTUNITY LOST.

Three-quarters of a century ago, when New York had less than one hundred thousand inhabitants and Fourteenth street was in the country, the city fathers of that time, with a wise prevision of the future greatness of the metropolis, planned a system of parks which, if carried out to-day on the same liberal scale, would give us a total park area of SEVEN THOUSAND FIVE HUNDRED ACRES.

On a map of the city of 1809, in which the street plan was laid out, your Commission found various tracts of land of different dimensions set apart as public grounds for the recreation of the people. Nearly all of those have been erased from subsequent maps, and as the largest, comprising about two hundred acres, was located in what is at present one of the most valuable sections of New York, the city may be said to have lost by the unpardonable negligence of its officials *in failing to secure the land in time and when it could have been acquired for probably much less than a million of dollars, hundreds of millions.*

Of nearly five hundred acres which are shown on the map as reserved for park purposes the tract referred to and entitled THE PARADE GROUND, embraced the whole space bounded by Twenty-third and Thirty-fourth streets and Third and Seventh avenues. Of this magnificent space, worth to-day hundreds of millions, *there remain only the six and a half acres of Madison Square.* Had this property been bought at the time it was placed on the map of the city what a valuable mine it would have proved, what a sinking fund it would have formed as a means of defraying the expense of needed public works and lessening the burdens of taxpayers! This part of the city, as stated, is one of its most

valuable sections, worth hundreds of millions of dollars, and yet the public treasury is to-day not one dollar the richer therefor. Had it been bought and held as public land and a portion of it sold when the growth of population and the imperative demands and necessities of business compelled, the public treasury would have been the gainer by untold millions. Is this short-sighted policy to be repeated in the new domain which has become a part of the great metropolis? Will we with the invaluable experience which this lesson teaches, be guilty of the same criminal negligence, the same culpable indifference?

The park system of 1809 presented a striking evidence of the foresight of De Witt Clinton, the conceiver and artificer of our great canal, and whose genius saw the inevitable as plainly in our city as in our State. That canal found New York State with a population very little more than she possessed at the beginning of the century, when it numbered 589,051 inhabitants—less than Pennsylvania, and about two-thirds that of Virginia which had 880,200. But Clinton, availing himself of the only break in the mountain range from the St. Lawrence to Georgia, enabled our State to use its possibilities, so that in 1875, while Virginia had only increased 90 per cent. in the century, New York during the same time had advanced 702 per cent.

Had the wise provision of De Witt Clinton in the matter of our public parks been carried into effect, as was done in the case of the great water way between the Hudson and Lake Erie, we would to-day be far in advance of every other city in the United States, instead of being the last on the list. The great park of 1809, was, considering the difference in population, equal to-day to an area of three thousand acres, which should be the extent of Central Park, if considered in its relative proportion to the present number of inhabitants.

The other parks of New York laid out at the period referred to were :

MARKET PLACE, extending from First avenue to the river beyond Avenue D, and from Seventh street to Tenth street—an area of about seventy acres.

HARLEM MARSH, included within Fifth avenue and the East river, some hundred feet beyond First avenue and One Hundred and Sixth and One Hundred and Ninth streets, containing about sixty-seven acres.

ELGIN GARDEN, having an area of fourteen acres, embraced within the limits of Fifth and Sixth avenues and Forty-seventh and Fifty-first streets.

HARLEM SQUARE, extending from Sixth to Seventh avenue, and from One Hundred and Seventeenth to One Hundred and Twenty-first street, covering twenty acres.

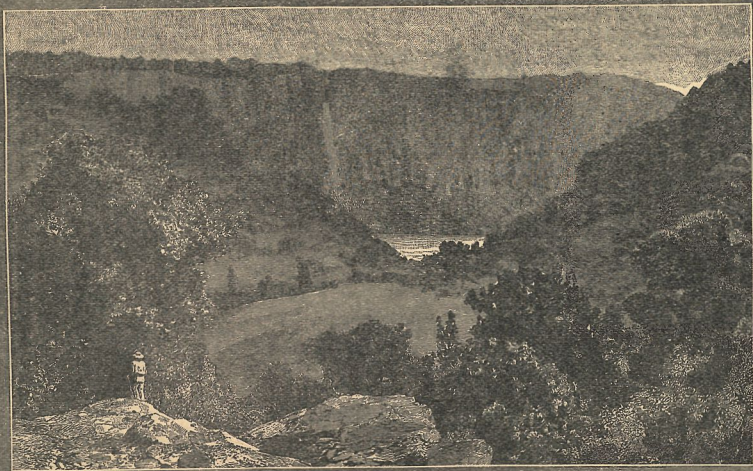
HAMILTON SQUARE, bounded by Sixty-sixth and Sixty-eighth streets and Third and Fifth avenues, and containing eighteen acres.

OBSERVATORY SQUARE, having an area of twenty-six acres, embraced within Fourth and Fifth avenues and Eighty-ninth and Ninety-fourth streets.

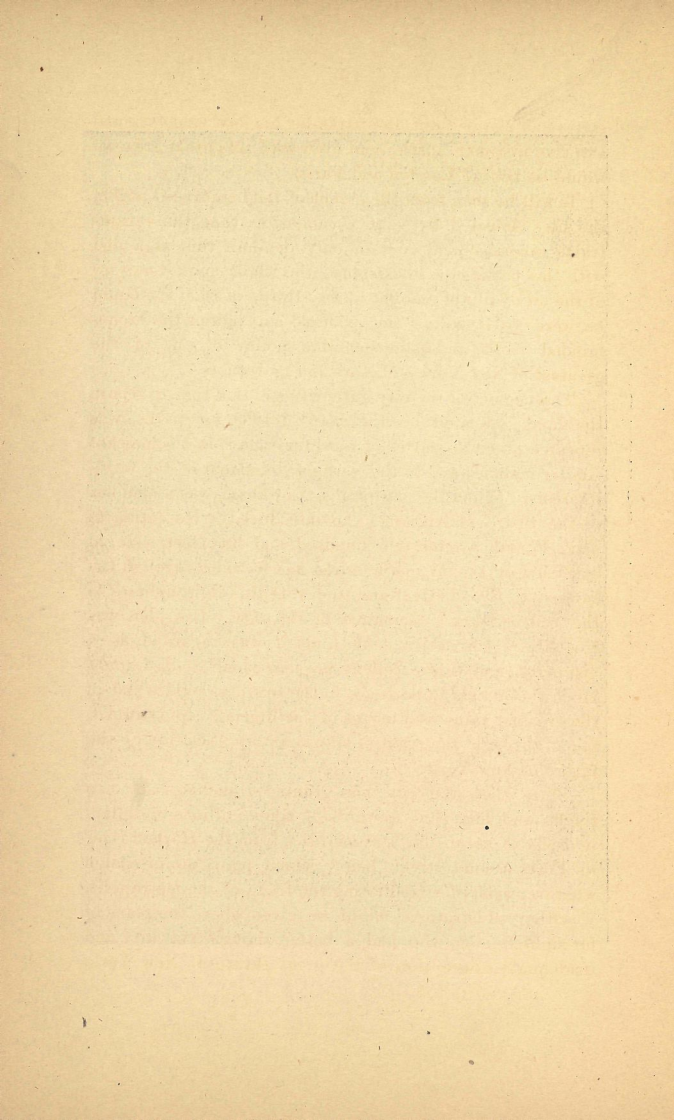
BLOOMINGDALE SQUARE, about twenty acres, and bounded by Eighth and Ninth avenues and Seventy-seventh and Eighty-first streets.

There were besides these another square which contained over twenty acres, and was located between Second avenue and the East river and Twenty-fifth and Twenty-eighth streets, and other grounds of less extent, but with an aggregate area of at least thirty additional acres.

The total area of all the parks laid out on the map of 1809, under the administration of De Witt Clinton, was about four hundred and eighty acres, or one acre to every two hundred and one inhabitants, which proportion if applied to the present population, would give us now in the year 1884, just three quarters of a century since the great



Van Cortlandt Park—View of Palisades from Vault Hill.



statesman mapped out the parks for his day, SEVEN THOUSAND FIVE HUNDRED ACRES ; and even with this great area we would be behind London and Paris.

It will be seen from the extent of land embraced within the sites selected by your Commission, that the various tracts recommended contain only one-half this area and with the parks now in existence, the whole park territory of the city will not amount to two-thirds of what it should be were we to follow the example and adopt the broad-minded views and statesmanlike policy of one of the greatest of New York's Mayors and Governors.

The neglect of the city authorities of that time to secure the land indicated on the map of 1809 for parks, was repeated about a quarter of a century later in a somewhat similar instance and to the serious detriment of the city's interests. When the late Judge Ingraham was a member of the Board of Aldermen, he introduced a resolution to make Fourth avenue one hundred and fifty feet wide, to construct an avenue one hundred feet in width through the Bowery to Broad street and to devote this thoroughfare to the railroads and commerce of the city. His idea was treated as chimerical; he himself was regarded as a visionary, and this excellent project, which to-day would be of the utmost importance to the business public and of the greatest value as a means of facilitating rapid transit, failed through the want of a proper appreciation of the future of New York.

Since then the city has granted franchises for two tracks, and has paid upwards of three millions of dollars in cash to secure far less facilities from the Harlem river to Forty-second street, below which point no provision whatever exists for facilitating the trade of the metropolis.

Other illustrations might be given where the plans of far-sighted men, who had a better, though yet dim and inadequate conception of the great future of New York,

were rejected ; plans which, if they had received the consideration to which they were entitled, would have added millions annually to the revenue of the city from the terminal charges on its trade. It is to be hoped that no such short-sighted policy will be permitted to prevail in the present instance.

THE PRESENT PARK AREA OF NEW YORK.

The remarkable contrast presented between the park area of New York and the territory set apart for the recreation of their respective populations by the great capitals of the world, becomes strikingly manifest on a comparison of the official figures. This contrast becomes still more striking when the statistics of population are taken into the account. Thus, while New York stands third on the census list of the great centres of the civilized world, and must eventually be the first, she occupies the lowest position in the acreage of her public parks. In this important respect she is behind even the second and third class cities of Europe, while there are at least half a dozen in the United States that have within a few years surpassed her in the extent of the land appropriated to the use of the people.

Since the Central Park was established, thirty years ago, the addition made to the park area of New York is less than two hundred acres, while her population has trebled. In the laying out of the newly annexed district, which comprises the Twenty-third and Twenty-fourth Wards, certain tracts were indicated on the maps as the sites of future parks, but the total area thus marked did not exceed four hundred and fifty acres, and only a small portion of this land has been "condemned" or obtained for the purposes of public domain. It is true that a parkway has also been established in the Twenty-fourth Ward, but this

is, of course, mainly a thoroughfare, and cannot, in any sense, be regarded as a substitute for a park.

It is very evident, then, that if our metropolis is to occupy her proper position among the capitals of the civilized world, no time is to be lost in making the necessary provision for the enlargement of the area of her public grounds.

When Central Park was created, New York, then confined to its island boundaries, had a population of six hundred thousand, and in parks and squares an aggregate, including its then recent great addition, of about nine hundred and fifty acres. Since that time, as stated, less than two hundred have been added, and this tract was south of the Harlem, and consisted of Morningside, Riverside and Mount Morris parks. A very large portion of the surface of the first two was rock, requiring for their completion a heavy outlay. The following list affords the most conclusive proof that could be given of our great deficiency in a matter vital to the physical well-being of our population. With regard to the Central, it should be stated here that over one hundred and forty acres are taken up with the receiving and distributing reservoirs :

	Acres.
Central Park.....	864
Riverside Park.....	89
Morningside Park.....	31 $\frac{1}{4}$
Mount Morris Park.....	20
High Bridge “.....	23
The Battery “.....	21
Tompkins “.....	10 $\frac{1}{2}$
City Hall “.....	8 $\frac{1}{4}$
Washington “.....	8
Union “.....	3 $\frac{1}{2}$
Madison “.....	6 $\frac{1}{2}$
Reservoir “.....	4 $\frac{3}{4}$
Stuyvesant “.....	4 $\frac{1}{4}$
	<hr/>
	1,094

Here we have a total of about eleven hundred acres south of the Harlem river, while north of it, in a territory of about equal extent, the park area indicated on the map of that section is less than half that amount, and of this, title has been acquired to less than one-fifth. In the mean time values have advanced and will continue to advance, though not with the rapidity which is certain to follow the establishment of parks now so urgently demanded by the interests of the metropolis.

At the date of the passage of the Central Park bill, the park area of the city was equal to about one acre to every six hundred and thirty inhabitants; to-day it is still less, showing that instead of advancing we have greatly retrograded. In place of one acre to every six hundred and thirty inhabitants, it is now one acre to every thirteen hundred and sixty-three.

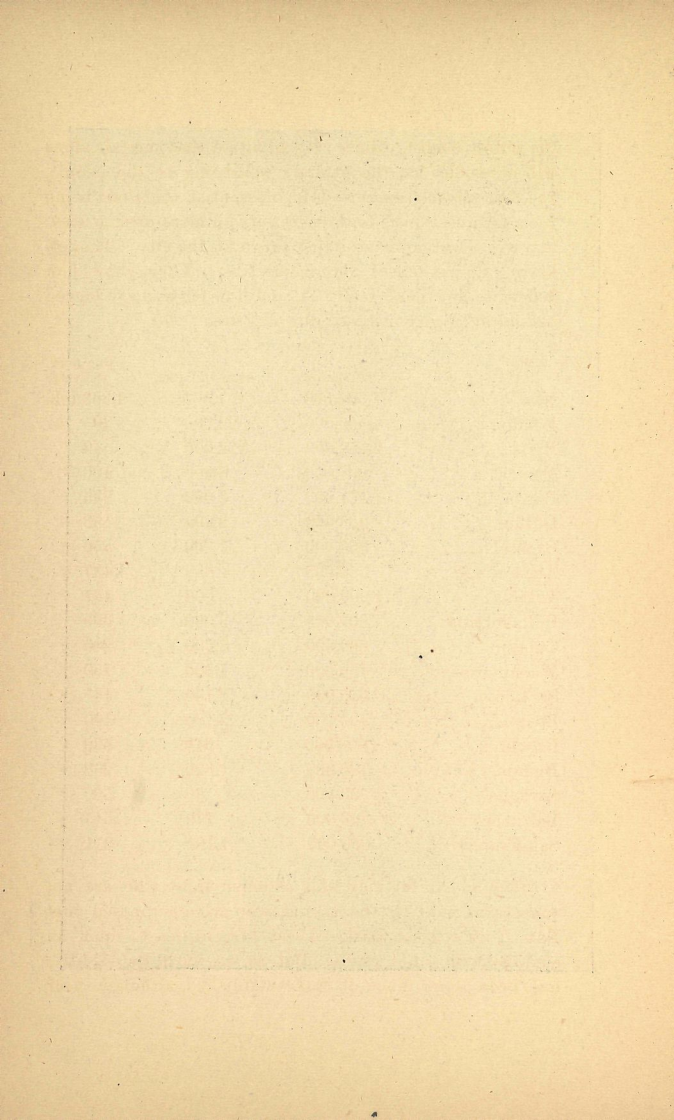
A STRIKING CONTRAST.

If we should decide that our park area must equal that of 1853 in its proportion to the then population of our city, we should add at least three thousand acres to its present area. But the reasons become still stronger in favor of the proposed increase when we compare our metropolis with other cities both in the old and new world. The extent of park territory embraced within the municipalities of London, Paris, Vienna, Berlin, Brussels, Dublin, Amsterdam and the City of Tokio, Japan, is presented in another part of this report, and we refer to the statistics now for the purpose of contrasting the park area in each instance with their respective populations as compared with the present status of New York in this regard.

Those who imagine that we kept pace with the rest of the world in this particular department of progress will be amazed at our shortcomings and the seeming apathy and indifference exhibited in a matter of such serious import to



Van Cortlandt Park—Northern End of the Lake.



the public health. Since it is admitted that pure air alone will not suffice for the sanitary well-being of the people, and that physical exercise is also essential, there can be no room for question as to the necessity for more open spaces; in a word, for more and larger lungs for the city. The following figures speak for themselves. They show how deficient New York really is, and how far we have lagged behind in the extension of our park area :

	Population.	Acres in Parks.	One Acre to Every
New York.....	1,500,000	1,094	1,363 inh.
London	4,500,000	22,000	205 "
Paris.....	2,250,000	172,000	13 "
Vienna.....	800,000	8,000	100 "
Berlin	1,174,293	5,000	235 "
Dublin.....	366,000	2,000	183 "
Brussels	350,000	1,000	350 "
Amsterdam	350,000	800	437 "
Tokio.....	1,000,000	6,000	167 "
Philadelphia.....	900,000	3,000	300 "
Chicago.	600,000	3,000	200 "
Washington.....	150,000	1,000	150 "
St. Louis.....	350,000	2,100	167 "
Boston.....	400,000	2,100	190 "
Brooklyn.....	600,000	940	639 "
Buffalo.	160,000	620	258 "
Savannah	33,000	60	550 "
Baltimore	400,000	776½	515 "
San Francisco.....	250,000	1,181	211 "

Such an exhibit may well astonish those who are not conversant with the facts, and who have supposed that New York's great park placed her, at least, upon an equality with other cities. But, as we have stated, little has been done since it was established, although year

by year it has become more and more apparent that it was wholly inadequate to the needs of our increasing population.

EXCESSIVE MORTALITY OF NEW YORK, AND ITS PROLIFIC CAUSES.

Probably no stronger arguments could be advanced as to the urgency of this matter than the statistics of mortality published by the New York Health Department, and which establishes the painful fact that our death rate is greater than that of the principal cities of Europe and of our own country. While New York's death rate is 29.64 to every thousand inhabitants, that of London is 21.29; of Paris, 26.27; of Berlin, 25.96; of Baltimore, 21.84; of Boston, 23.42; and of San Francisco, 21.68. There can be no doubt that this excessive mortality is in a great degree attributable to our pernicious tenement-house system, to that criminal herding of people in those huge death-traps in which the air is literally poisoned through defective plumbing and drainage, striking down the young and the old, the strong and the weak without distinction. Here pestilential diseases have their origin, from hence they spread, threatening to involve in a common fate the healthier and wealthier portions of the city. Here, in the closely packed dwellings of the workers and toilers, death reaps his richest harvests, particularly among the very young.

In the summer heats, intensified in these localities by the absence of ventilation and the over-crowded condition of the apartments, the air is stifling, and the occupants seek relief on the roofs or the sidewalks, where, as reported in the city press, thousands are to be found during the hot, sultry nights of the summer season. The mortality among the young, owing to the causes stated, far exceeds that of any of the cities named. Of the deaths in New

York in 1882, numbering 37,924, no less than 17,520 were children under five years of age, a little less than one-half of the whole number, while in Paris the proportion was below one-third, in London and other European cities a little more, and in Boston, Baltimore, Cincinnati and San Francisco a like ratio. This disparity, however, in the death rate will cease to surprise when the packing process which is practised in the densely populated sections is fully understood.

In a report of the sanitary condition of the city, published by the "Council of Hygiene and Public Health," some years ago (and there has been "little, if any, improvement since," as shown by the statistics of mortality), it is stated that the results of a sanitary survey of the Fourth Ward showed that the population was packed at the rate of two hundred and forty thousand to the square mile. "As now distributed," the report proceeds, "the tenant houses of the city are nearly all found within an area of four square miles. * * * Such concentration and packing of a population has probably never been equalled in any city as may be found in particular localities in New York. In some entire districts, as in the Fourth, Sixth, and portions of the Eleventh and Seventeenth Wards, the density of the population is far greater than in any parish or ward in London, or any other European city of which we have definite knowledge."

In a report of the number of tenement houses, and families occupying apartments therein, made by the Health Board in 1881, for Mr. Charles E. Hill, Chief Special Agent of the United States Census, it is stated that the total number of persons living in those dwellings was 962,172, or two-thirds of the whole population of New York.

HYGIENIC EFFECTS OF PARKS.

It may be asked, What have these statistics to do with the question before this Commission. The answer is, we think, obvious and conclusive. Parks, rightly considered, are demanded among great masses of population by the laws of hygiene, by the very necessities of their condition, by their deprivation night and day, and month after month, through all seasons, of the pure air of heaven, except when on Sundays and holidays they are at liberty to enjoy themselves in the green fields, or out in the woods, cleansing their lungs with the pure life-giving atmosphere. Even one day's recreation in the country strengthens the body and helps it to resist the approach of infectious diseases. Sun and air are as necessary to human beings as to plants, and to none are they more necessary than to the hundreds of thousands of workers and toilers who are shut up all day long and, at times, through a part of the night, in our factories and workshops. That our death rate should exceed that of other cities need, therefore, all things considered, excite no surprise.

"The necessity," says Mr. Russel Thayer, the able and experienced Superintendent of Fairmount Park, "of providing some place where the people can take recreation, breathe the fresh air uncontaminated by the smoke and gases of the city, and see the green grass and the growing trees, is so universally acknowledged throughout the civilized world that at the present day there are but few cities of any importance in Europe that have not their public pleasure grounds or parks."

The duty of those who are charged with the responsibility of government is clear and unmistakable. If hospitals are indispensable for the cure of sickness and disease, then certainly no less so are the means for the preservation of the public health. If bathing in clear water is essential,



Van Cortlandt Park—Old Mill of the Revolution and Elms.

still more so is an atmospheric bath. In a word, we cannot hope to have a healthy population if we disregard the ordinary laws of health. Sun, light, air and physical exercise are the true hygienic factors, and, therefore, every acre added to our park area is a personal benefit to each member of the community. It is not for the mere ornamentation of the metropolis, though that in itself is a high recommendation, that parks are desired, but as great sanitariums, as essential parts of a system which embraces within it the drainage of cities, the ventilations of dwellings, and the establishment of institutions for the care of the sick and the afflicted.

THE QUESTION OF ACCESSIBILITY TO SUBURBAN PLEASURE GROUNDS.

On Sundays and holidays during the late spring and through the summer and fall, the parks would be thronged by tens of thousands of visitors, of all ages and conditions, seeking healthful exercise, pure air, the pleasant sight of the green fields, and the refreshing shade of the leafy woods. The objection that these parks are too far from the most populous parts of the city, and that they would remain unused for many years, is sufficiently answered by the fact that trains on the elevated roads are packed with masses of humanity on their way to the vicinity of High Bridge, and to resorts still more distant, while the steamboats that ply up and down the two great rivers, and those that run to Rockaway, Coney Island, Glen Island and other points of attraction are crowded to their utmost capacity.

Central Park has long ceased to meet the needs of the people, and as a pleasure-ground it can hardly be said to satisfy the public desire. Of its many attractions, its picturesque views, its admirable design, its artificial decorations, there can be but one opinion; but inasmuch as the public is confined to a comparatively limited portion

of its space, it fails of its original purpose, and rural or suburban parks are, therefore, a metropolitan necessity. It has been said, with much force, that "the prohibition against the use of the lawns, woods and meadows, and the general restrictions with regard to space render it as exclusive as the domains of European nobles, in which the visitors are confined to the roads and footpaths. As the parks are for the people, and as the healthful recreation of the visitors is the one great object for which they are created, this consideration should be made paramount over all others in their management." The people want recreation grounds where they are not confined to dusty walks, but where they can stroll at will, wander in woods, rest or picnic on the grass, and enjoy the freedom of unrestricted use.

Admitting, however, that the objection as to distance has some force, how long will it continue to apply, and how many years will it take, in view of the present increase of population, and the extension of our city northward and easterly, the only directions, as already stated, in which it is possible for it to extend, to bring the people up to the very borders of the parks?

The mere agitation of the subject has turned the public attention to that part of the city as a most desirable section for the erection of dwellings, and much progress has already been made in the building line. The farm boundaries are rapidly disappearing, and acres are being divided into city lots. Your Commission see in the demand for dwellings north of the Harlem River and beyond the boundary line eastward, where the land, from its level character, is admirably adapted for building purposes, unmistakable indications of the advance of population in that direction. The removal of the last legal difficulty to the construction of the Suburban Rapid Transit, and the erection of the bridge over the river at Second avenue to

connect the rapid transit systems at this point (a work which is now being expeditiously pushed forward), has imparted unwonted activity to building operations. Miles of new streets are being opened, lines of dwellings are extending to all points within the Twenty-third and Twenty-fourth Wards, and by the time the available spaces south of the Harlem River shall have been occupied, a new city with nearly a million inhabitants will have arisen in the new accession.

It is not necessary, however, to wait for the increase of population and the extension of the city northward to render the parks available. There are now so many lines of communication which bring them within easy access that the argument as to distance has lost whatever force it may have once had. To that portion of our inhabitants who, during the summer and early fall crowd the various resorts within twenty, thirty and even fifty miles of the city, making daily excursions by rail and by water, the question of distance is of but slight consequence. They simply regard the time spent in going and returning as a part of the day's recreation, and when they arrive at their destination their pleasure is in no degree lessened by the time they may have spent in getting there. But to those who prefer to pass as much of their leisure as possible in the parks the facilities presented by the various lines of communication already established, as well as those projected and in contemplation, will make them more accessible than was the Central Park for many years after it was laid out.

To-day Van Cortlandt Park can be reached in an hour from the Battery by the Northern Railroad, which runs through the grounds, while from the centre of population the time occupied in making the trip need not exceed three-quarters of an hour at the utmost. As through trains will eventually be established the time will be still further reduced. By the Hudson River Railroad from the Grand

Central which runs to Kingsbridge within half a mile of its southern boundary and by the Harlem Railroad about the same distance from the eastern limit, the time consumed should not exceed twenty minutes, and as travel increases, branch tracks will be constructed from both roads to the very borders of the park itself.

The Arcade Railroad which proposes to provide through travel at the rate of thirty miles an hour from the Battery, as well as way travel, has projected a line which runs through Broadway to Twenty-third street, passing under Madison square and up Madison avenue to the Harlem river, thence through the Twenty-third and Twenty-fourth Wards as shown on the map—furnishes additional rapid transit to the Van Cortlandt Park.

The Bronx Park is accessible by the Southern Boulevard, within twenty minutes of the Harlem river, by the Portchester and Harlem Branch of the New Haven at the West Farms station; by the New York and Harlem at Fordham, and by the projected line of Suburban Rapid Transit, the bridge connecting which with the Second Avenue Railroad is now in process of construction. In addition to these there is talk of still other lines, which will be run by the new cable process and the use of dummy engines on surface roads, running to Tremont, Fordham and West Farms.

The more central location of Crotona park places it almost directly on the line of the New York and Harlem railroad while St. Marys and Claremont being more local in their character have less need of rapid transit than those grounds which are designed for the recreation of the great mass of the people from distant as well as from contiguous points.

As to Pelham Bay Park the facilities of communication are equal to any we have mentioned. The Portchester and Harlem Railroad, as will be seen by reference to the map,



Bronx Park—On the Heights above the River.

passes through it, and the time from the terminus at Harlem river should not exceed ten minutes. This terminus is easily reached by way of the Third and Second avenue Elevated Railroads. But these are not the only means of access; for visitors who prefer to go by water and enjoy the pleasure of a sail up the East river and the Sound, can reach the park by one of the fleet of steamers which, we have no doubt, will find profitable occupation during the summer in conveying passengers to and from the great water-side park of the metropolis. In addition to these, other routes are in contemplation, and surveys have already been made for a road which will pass in close proximity to the park, and, entering the city line at Bronxdale, will find its terminus at the Harlem river.

It is very evident that additional facilities for transportation must be provided to keep pace with the rapid growth of the city and the marked increase of our population, especially in the northern section of the island, and in the Twenty-third and Twenty-fourth Wards. The statistics of business of the elevated and surface railroads are so conclusive that there is no longer any room for doubt on this point. The following table shows the travel by both since and including 1877 :

	El. R. R.	Horse Railways.	Total.
1877.....	3,011,862	160,924,436	163,936,298
1878.....	9,291,319	160,952,832	170,244,151
1879.....	46,045,181	142,038,381	188,083,562
1880.....	60,831,757	150,390,592	211,222,349
1881.....	75,585,778	146,050,808	221,636,586
1882.....	86,361,029	166,510,617	252,871,646
1883.....	92,113,209	175,994,523	268,107,732

It will be seen, by a comparison of the years 1877 with 1883, covering a period of six years, that the increase of travel over both elevated and horse railways was

104,182,134; in a word, that there were over 104,000,000 more passengers carried in 1883 than in 1877. It is also worthy of note that while there was a falling off in the travel on the surface roads in 1879, 1880 and 1881, because of the competition with the new system, they more than recovered their business in 1882 and 1883, while the latter also continued to gain on their percentage of increase.

BOTANICAL AND ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS.

Botanical gardens being rightly regarded as indispensable adjuncts to public parks, your Commission deem it an imperative duty to call attention to the fact that we have at present in our park system nothing really deserving of the name. We have in Central Park a conservatory, in which a limited collection of rare plants is to be found, and this, they beg leave to suggest, presents an excellent nucleus for the purpose.

If we are to have an enlargement of our park area commensurate with the present needs of our city, a botanical garden must be included as an integral part of the system. A tract of sufficient extent could be laid out in one of the contemplated parks as soon as the land is secured, the selection being, of course, determined by the adaptability of the soil for this special purpose.

If we may judge from the success which has attended the establishment of this attractive and valuable feature in the celebrated Philadelphia park, there would be little difficulty in regard to its proper maintenance. The project, we confidently believe, would meet not only with the warm approval but the substantial support of that large and yearly increasing class who take delight in the cultivation of plants and flowers.

From a report of the Park Commissioners of Philadelphia, we find that in one year the value of contributions to

the Fairmount Botanic Gardens was six thousand five hundred dollars, and the number of plants, including many of the rarest specimens, was nearly a thousand. We have no doubt that among our citizens would be found as much liberality. The example set by Boston in making the Arboretum a permanent part of its park system is deserving of the highest praise, and might well be imitated by New York. A botanical garden on a large scale, like that of Paris or London, would serve as a practical school of horticulture, and would exercise a favorable influence on the movement for the preservation of our forests, a movement which has taken permanent form in nearly all the Western States, and which is nowhere more needed than here. The Garden of Plants in Paris has an area of twenty-two acres, exclusive of its nursery of forest trees, and in connection with it is a school of botany. All the plants are classified with great care—the medicinal, the alimentary, the ornamental, the poisonous, and those employed in manufactures—each indicated by the color of the ticket with which it is labelled and on which its distinctive name is inscribed.

All the plants and trees of our continent should have a place in our botanical garden, and our schools and colleges would find therein a grand field for instruction in one of the most fascinating and useful branches of scientific knowledge.

A park system that failed to include a zoological garden would be wanting in one of the most essential requisites. For a large number of visitors, an exhibition of such a character has an interest that surpasses every other. The young never tire of it, the illiterate are captivated by it, the student seeks therein a verification of the knowledge acquired from books, and the busy man and the idler find in it relaxation and recreation. It brings foreign lands as it were to our gates; it calls up strange scenes and unfamiliar landscapes; for who can look upon a herd of camels without see-

ing, in his mind's eye, a background of desert sand, or at polar bears, swinging like pendulums from side to side, without thinking of the frozen solitudes of the Arctic circle.

A thoroughly supplied menagerie, classified and arranged so as to include not only the rare animals from foreign countries but the fauna of our own land, would be a most valuable feature. Such a department should be made sufficiently comprehensive to embrace, if possible, one specimen at least of each variety, with the name and habitat inscribed upon its cage, and large and enclosed spaces where uncaged deer, and other animals, may disport themselves, as in their native forests, to their own joy and that of the spectators. A well-organized, well-kept zoological garden might be made a medium of instruction for the young, who would gladly and easily acquire knowledge presented in the guise of amusement through an organ so difficult to fatigue as the eye.

A proper site secured by the favorable action of our State Legislature, a number of wealthy gentlemen in New York city, who have already signified their intention to subscribe to an enterprise of such a character, would set the ball in motion.

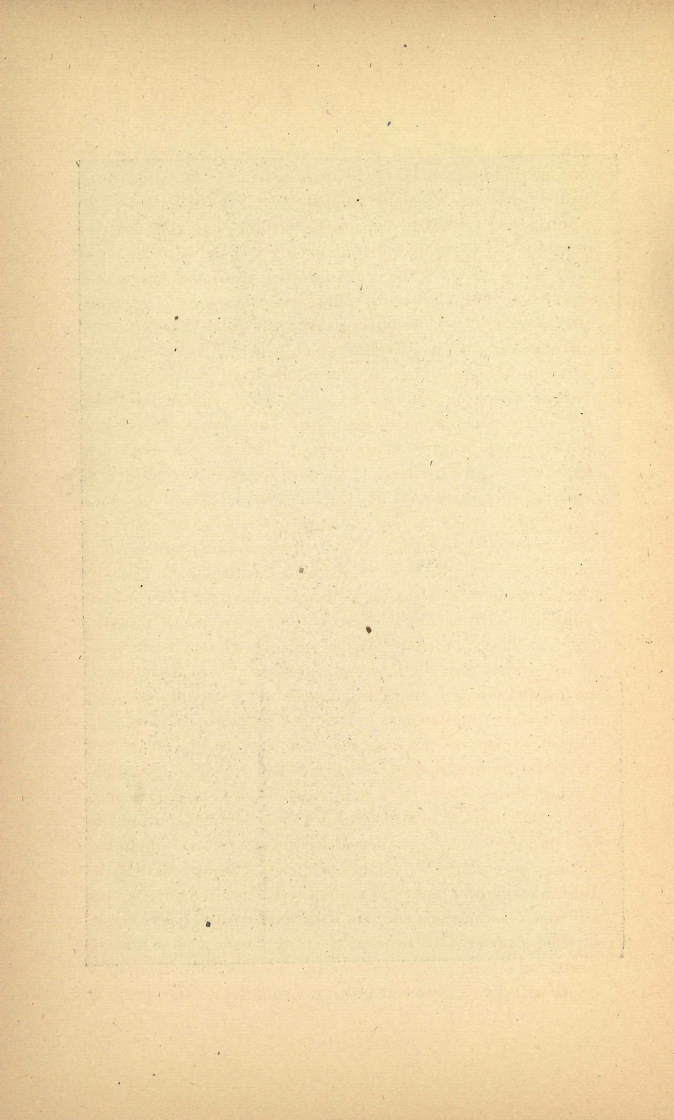
It is very evident that so long as the present so-called menagerie is confined to the Central Park, where it has become a subject of controversy and contention, it must be contracted in its scope, unsatisfactory to the community, and not of a character to invite individual or public benefactions. It is unfortunate that this is the case, but the fact admitted, the remedy is obvious and easily applied with the extension of our park area.

NECESSITY FOR A SITE FOR A WORLD'S FAIR.

When the subject of a world's fair in the City of New York was proposed as an appropriate manner of celebrating, in the year 1883, the centenary of the close of the



Bronx Park—The Cascade.



War of the Revolution and the successful accomplishment of our independence, the question of the selection of a proper site was earnestly discussed. The proposition to appropriate a tract in Central Park large enough for the purpose led to animated controversy, but the apprehension that the erection of the required structures and the works connected therewith would materially damage the grounds was so general and so strong that the design was finally abandoned. It was evident, in fact, from the beginning that wherever else the fair might be held, it certainly would not be tolerated in Central Park. For this, as well as for other reasons unnecessary to dwell upon, the project fell through for the time being. The subject, however, has been again revived and with better prospects of success in connection with the contemplated enlargement of our park area. In one of the proposed sites ample space can be found, and the facilities of transportation afforded by the projected lines of rapid transit will place any one of the parks within comparatively easy access to the whole population. Whether the favored locality be in the Twenty-third or Twenty-fourth Wards, or on the Sound, at or near Pelham Neck, there will, in the opinion of your Commission, be no difficulty in procuring a suitable tract, adapted not only by its topography but by its location, picturesque surroundings, and accessibility for an exhibition of the industry of all nations greater than the world has yet seen. Perhaps no site can be found more favored and beautiful for such a display of the fabrics of all countries, than the one hundred and eighty acres of Hunter's Island—included within the boundaries of the proposed Pelham Bay Park. By that time the means of transit will have become so far advanced, as to place the isle within cheap and easy access.

The opportunity presented in the new and extensive parks for a grand exhibition of the world's industrial products will give a new and powerful impulse to the project,

the success of which we believe is largely dependent on the issue of the present movement for more parks. In fact, experience has proved that the only proper place for such an enterprise is a public park, and as in the case of Philadelphia and other cities, the buildings can be utilized in the embellishment of the ground and for the pleasure and instruction of the people by industrial, artistic, scientific, and other displays, as may be suggested by the judgment of the managers or the desire of the public. Upon the favorable action of your Honorable Bodies therefore may be said to depend not only the enlargement of our park area but the establishment of a world's fair in the near future, and an addition to the attractions of our city in the invaluable form of a permanent exhibition.

THE CENSUS RETURNS AND THE LESSONS THEY TEACH—THE GRAND FUTURE OF OUR METROPOLIS.

As the enlargement of our city is demanded by the rapid increase of its population, a reference to the census statistics of the last eighty years is deemed particularly appropriate. The following table shows the number of inhabitants at each decade commencing with the year 1800:

Years.	Population.	Percentage of increase.
1800.....	60,489
1810.....	96,373	59.32
1820.....	123,706	28.36
1830.....	202,589	63.76
1840.....	312,710	54.35
1850.....	515,547	64.86
1860.....	813,669	57.84
1870.....	942,292	15.80
1880.....	1,206,299	28.02

In 1853, when at the close of an exceptionally protracted session the State Legislature passed the Central Park bill, the number of persons in the City of New York was about

six hundred thousand. To-day it is estimated at one million and a half—an addition of nearly three hundred thousand since the census of 1880. This estimate is based upon data that, in the absence of an actual enumeration, may be accepted as affording a fairly reliable approximation. The death rate, which, except in periods of epidemic diseases, bears an almost certain ratio to the whole population, the great activity in building operations, the marked increase in travel on the surface and elevated railroads, the rapid growth of the upper wards, and the promise of still greater progress during the present and succeeding years, afford unmistakable indications that a large addition has since the last census been made to the number of our inhabitants.

The increase exhibited in the above table varies in the different periods ; but the total of the eighty years from 1800 to 1880 shows an average increase of 46.54 per cent. for each decade. From 1860 to 1870 there was, during the civil war, a marked falling off in the percentage, but this we are assured was owing to another cause which has not been taken into the account in these calculations and which exercised a great and controlling influence. This cause so powerful in retarding the natural growth of New York was to be found in the want of the necessary facilities of transportation and travel, and which, as shown in an address delivered some fourteen years ago by Hon. H. C. Gardiner, before a meeting of the owners of real estate in this city and Westchester county, resulted in a loss of 407,732 in its population from 1840 to 1870. In other words the number of inhabitants in New York in the latter year should have been 1,334,078 instead of 942,292. This decrease of population we are further informed was attended by a loss in value of the taxable property on the upper part of the Island “to an amount exceeding \$500,000,000 ;” a tax on which of only two and one-half per cent. could have produced a yearly revenue to the city of \$12,500,000.

There can be no doubt that this result, so detrimental to the interests and welfare of the city, to its growth and prosperity, is mainly, if not wholly, attributable to the want of adequate means of communication between its northern and southern portions. What New York and Westchester lost Long Island and New Jersey have gained by meeting the imperative demand for rapid transit. Within the last few years, however, this demand has been to a great extent supplied by the elevated railroads, and we have no doubt, as already stated, that the beneficial effect will be found in a larger percentage of increase from 1880 to 1890 than during any previous decade. The marked increase in population and enhancement in real estate in the upper part of the Island, and particularly in the Twelfth and Nineteenth Wards, is chiefly attributable to the facilities afforded by the system of rapid transit from the Battery to the Harlem river. One fact is evident from these indications, that our Metropolis is rapidly recovering her lost ground and with the contemplated lines of rapid transit, in addition to those in operation, we will have nothing to fear from competition elsewhere, particularly with the advantages which the proposed parks are certain to confer.

Indeed the present prosperity of New York justifies an estimate based upon the highest percentage of increase. The whole country may be said to contribute of its wealth, its growth and its population to our progress, and whatever affects the one beneficially or injuriously produces a corresponding effect upon the other. Taking as a basis of calculation for the next ten years the largest percentage of increase, which is sixty-five, we shall have in 1893 within the limits of our metropolis nearly two million and a half of souls, or an accession of 975,000 to our present number. In a lecture delivered in 1881, the eminent Arctic explorer, Dr. I. I. Hayes, referring to the future of our metropolis,

spoke of it as "a city destined in time to be the largest in the world; a city which substantially holds in its population, Jersey and Brooklyn as part of itself," and round whose "matchless harbor" there are "more than two millions of souls."

Those who are disposed to question the accuracy of an estimate which places the population of New York at this figure—equal to that of the City of Paris to-day—are referred to the census returns of past decades, which show as large a relative increase. From the year 1820 to 1830 the population increased from 123,000 to 202,000, or at the rate of sixty-four per cent. ; and from 1840 to 1850 the increase was sixty-five per cent. With large accessions yearly from immigration, of which New York receives a liberal proportion, with very considerable additions from our returning citizens who were induced by moderate rents and better facilities of transit to take up their abode elsewhere, with the inducements and requirements of business and the attractions of city life, and the attractive power of large and noble parks; with all these causes and influences at work, we may justly expect as great if not a still greater percentage of increase within the present decade; an increase from all these various and combined influences of at least sixty-five per cent.

That this is not an overestimate we have already had incontestible evidence in the increased immigration since 1880. In the following year the accessions to our city's population from this source alone was estimated by the Commissioners at one hundred and forty-three thousand, so that a large portion of the expected addition of sixty-five per cent. may be regarded as secured in advance. Should this ratio continue decade after decade for the next half century, then at the end of 1933 the population of New York will have exceeded the enormous and almost incredible aggregate of twelve millions of souls. But making

due allowance for every contingency, and particularly for periods of business depression and financial revulsions, and calculating on an average increase of forty per cent., which is eight per cent. per decade less than the average of the percentage of increase from 1820 to 1880, as shown by the census returns already given, the population estimated on this basis will have exceeded eight millions. This is somewhat more than five times our present number of inhabitants, and yet it is much less than the ratio of increase in the fifty years from 1830 to 1880. In 1830 the population was, as stated in the table referred to, 202,589, and in 1880, 1,250,000, a six-fold increase.

Large, however, as the estimate may appear, it will cease to excite surprise when the marvellous growth and rapid development of the whole country is considered. The last census showed that the population of the United States was somewhat over fifty millions, and that it had trebled in every forty years from 1800 to 1880. The three-fold increase was a constant factor in each of these periods as shown by the following table :

Year.		Percentage of Increase.
1800.....	5,308,483.....
1810	7,239,881.....	36.45
1820.....	9,633,822.....	33.12
1830.....	12,866,020.....	33.49
1840.....	17,069,453.....	34.12
1850.....	23,191,876.....	35.86
1860.....	31,443,321.....	35.59
1870.....	38,558,371.....	22.62
1880.....	50,155,783.....	30.76

Here we have an almost uniform rate of increase, and applying the calculation afforded by this basis to the next forty years, we shall have by 1920, within the limits of the United States, at least one hundred and fifty millions, and at the close of half a century, or 1930, two hundred mill-

ions. Unlike the great capitals of Europe, New York will not only be the capital of a nation but of a continent, of a world. Who shall venture to place bounds to its growth, its power, its magnificence? How insignificant then shall appear the area set apart for the recreation of its teeming millions! One great element of the prosperity and fame of our city is, and will be, the coming hither, for business and residence of men of wealth and mark from other parts of the Union. If they can bring their families to the head of navigation and find here a city of attractions, a city possessing all the charms and advantages of a high state of civilization, where health is regarded, where the sources of culture exist, where refined taste is displayed, where art is fostered and learning honored. A city which can compete in attractions with the foreign capitals, our wealthier classes affect, and where they "most do congregate;" we may reasonably expect that New York will become the great centre to which will tend for permanent abode much of the wealth, intellect and influence from other cities of the land. Perhaps no single means could be devised of such magnetic power in this respect, none which would so spread abroad the repute of our city for beauty and attractiveness as the parks we recommend. Such a reputation will entice hither and, if preserved, will retain amongst us men whom enterprise and fortune have favored in other parts of the country, men whose names will swell the list of our celebrities, and whose means and expenditures will add respectively more to the opulence of our city than the whole combined outlay for the parks.

In a pamphlet issued about two years ago by the New York Park Association, we find the following glowing but not overdrawn picture of the future of our country and its great metropolis:

"When we consider the gigantic strides the nation has made within the last twenty-five years, despite the losses caused by the

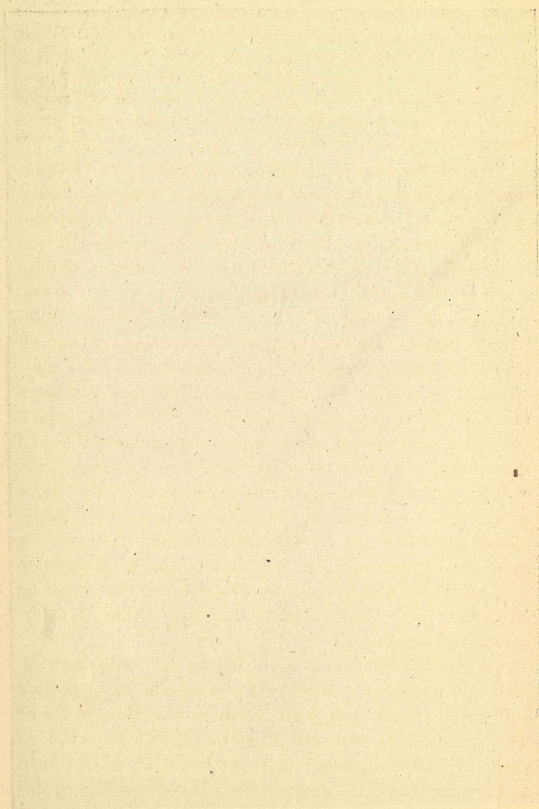
most destructive civil war recorded in the history of the world, we shall more fully realize its grand destiny. A nation of nearly two hundred millions, all living under the one government and speaking the one language, must exercise a vast, a controlling influence on the civilization, the policy, the commerce of the world, and the great metropolis, the commercial capital of that nation, must be the financial centre around which the business interests of the whole continent shall revolve. London shall no longer hold the balance of power in the monetary world, and Lombard street and the Bourse shall be governed in their movements by the Wall street barometer.

“The New York of the future will be not only to the new, but to the old world as well, what London and Paris are to Europe—the great centre of capital, commerce, and enterprise, the arbiter of taste and fashion, the magnet to attract travelers from the ends of the earth. Here the wealth of a continent will find profitable fields for investment; here art and genius will discover new forms of expression; here invention will lighten labor, and liberty will dignify toil; here, too, wealth will find its noblest work in erecting homes and asylums for those who have been wounded in the battle of life; and its most graceful use in founding institutions wherein might be stored the products of the brain power of the world, whether in printed volumes or illuminated manuscripts, in speaking canvas or in sculptured marble; such institutions as the Astor and Lenox Libraries, Cooper Institute and the Museum of Art. Standing midway in the paths of commerce and trade between Europe and Asia, between the active civilization of the one and the long dormant but awakening civilization of the other, the most vivid imagination might well shrink from foreshadowing the future of our imperial city. Nothing can impede or delay its progress but the apathy or indifference of its citizens; nothing impart to it such an impetus as their active interest in every project designed to extend its boundaries and increase its attractiveness. Apprehensions of the decline of trade, or the loss of this or that branch of business, from competition with rival cities, may alarm timid minds, but the true policy is to make our metropolis so inviting that it will bring not only pleasure-seekers, but profit-seekers to enjoy its advantages and participate in its pleasures.

“The New York for which we are now to provide is a city whose population will, within the present century, surge in great waves up to the northern and eastern boundary lines and into Westchester county. In the next quarter of a century the proposed parks



Bronx Park—Sylvan Point.



will be as inadequate to the demands of the future as the Central Park is to meet the requirements of the present. If our officials are equal to the opportunity now presented they will, under the authority which it is to be hoped the Legislature at its present session will confer, secure a generous area for the purposes stated. This they owe to the whole population, but in a special manner do they owe it to that most numerous portion, the workers and the toilers, the men who have built up the great but still unfinished city, and for whom these spacious pleasure-grounds would supply a want which the Central Park can never satisfy."

One of the most convincing proofs that could be presented of the correctness of the estimates of the population of New York, is furnished by the remarkable activity displayed during the past three or four years in the erection of all kinds and classes of dwellings. Should this activity continue without abatement during the next ten years, it is calculated that all the available space on Manhattan Island will be occupied by buildings. That all this space, however, will be built upon within the time specified is not to be supposed. Such has not been the case heretofore in the growth of our city, which has been constructed, so to speak, in detached pieces that have in time been united by connecting links and finally swallowed up in the great mass. The same process will continue in the annexed districts. Rapid transit will bring into use the cheaper lands lying near or even beyond the suburbs, and these nuclei of population will, like those which have been absorbed by the advancing city, lose their identity and disappear within its ever-extending boundaries.

Of the 975,000 which according to the foregoing estimate will be added to New York's residents, what portion will reside south and what north of the Harlem river? The question is not one of mere choice only but of economy, and the answer is to be found in rapid transit and low rents. If the annexed district receives half of this

increase, then there will be half a million, and possibly three-quarters of a million, in the Twenty-third and Twenty-fourth Wards at the close of the next ten years. As our city can extend only in a northerly and north-easterly direction, and as we should make provision for an increase of our park area in time when land can be had at low rates, then a proper regard for economy requires that it should be purchased in that section and at the earliest possible day.

CAUSE OF OUR LIMITED PARK AREA.

In the dimensions of park territory the City of New York has lingered far behind the principal cities both of Europe and America, compared with her population and prospects, and this has been owing to the shape and extent of her domain. The North and East rivers bound her securely on two sides, and the Harlem and Spuyten Duyvil restrained her on the north. She could not overleap these boundaries, and within them there was not room for any parks of magnitude. She thought she had accomplished wonders when from her limited resources she set apart 864 acres for public use and recreation. Now she feels how inadequate is that amount. She has learned that she can stretch her growing and giant limbs into the outlying region, incorporating a magnificent area within her elastic bounds. She has space now, by the far-seeing wisdom of the Legislature, for parks of adequate size and in territory eminently fitted for the purpose. She has not awaked from her sleep one moment too soon. Ten years more and it would have been too late.

By a fortunate providence there are ample spaces in the centre and on the coast which have been withheld from commercial enterprises, which are not built upon, which are still regarded by their owners as acres and not as city

lots, and which can now be obtained at a fair value as country grounds. If these lands should be now obtained for park purposes, there can be no doubt that the value of the tract appropriated will be not only greatly enhanced, as in the case of Central Park, which, purchased thirty years ago at a cost of \$6,666,000, is to-day estimated as worth \$200,000,000; but new life will be infused into the surrounding and neighboring property, adding immensely to their taxable value, thus replenishing the city treasury.

EFFECT OF CENTRAL PARK ON THE VALUE OF ADJACENT LAND.

The bill providing for the establishment of Central Park was passed by the Legislature of 1853, and in 1856 the Commissioners appointed by the Supreme Court to condemn the land and make the awards therefor had concluded their work, having appropriated a tract of 660 acres.

For this tract the total amount paid including all expenses was \$5,493,766, and the actual cost per acre was about \$7,800. The two reservoirs embraced an area of 142 acres, making a total, with the land already purchased between Fifth and Eighth avenues and Fifty-ninth and One Hundred and Sixth streets, of 802 acres. To this was added by a law passed in 1859, six years after the passage of the first act, the section extending from One Hundred and Sixth to One Hundred and Tenth street, containing sixty-two acres, making an aggregate of 864 acres, which is the present area of the park. For this tract the city was obliged to pay nearly twenty thousand dollars an acre, about five times the cost of the land at the upper extremity of the park when the first purchase was made, six years before. Had the whole territory been bought at the same time, immediately after the passage of the act in 1853, at least EIGHT HUNDRED THOUSAND DOLLARS WOULD HAVE BEEN SAVED TO THE PUBLIC TREASURY.

The increase of values at the northern extremity of the park, great as it appears from this striking proof, was much less than the enhancement which took place at other points, particularly near the southern limit, the year after the passage of the law, when the advance was over THREE HUNDRED PER CENT.

Such facts as these speak volumes. The most convincing arguments are weak and impotent compared with the invulnerable logic of these figures. The most eloquent appeals for prompt legislative action have no such influence as these silent numerals. They prove beyond the possibility of doubt or cavil the necessity of securing park lands at once, and securing a sufficient amount.

The lesson taught by this costly experience should be profitably applied in the present case. True economy is best subserved by a liberal appropriation of land while it can be had at low rates. Three or four thousand acres secured in the territory north of the Harlem river within the present year, and before the effect of the work now in progress to facilitate rapid transit from the Battery to the Bronx is felt in the inevitable and almost immediate enhancement of values, will save millions of dollars in the near future. If the city should issue its bonds for the purchase price of the title of all the lands recommended herein for parks, making the same payable in thirty years, and at an interest of three and a half per cent., the argument derived from past experience demonstrates that at the maturity of the bonds, the amount of both principal and interest, and the expense of putting the parks in order and maintaining them, would be more than repaid by the increased tax income, while the city would hold the title, enhanced in value thirty fold, free and clear and without cost.

Since, in addition, it is conceded that parks are indispensable to the health of great centres of population—a fact

which is sustained by the highest authorities in sanitary science—there would seem to be no room for doubt as to the duty of the official powers in the matter.

OBJECTIONS AS TO THE PROPOSED INCREASE OF PARK AREA ANSWERED.

It has been said that the movement is premature, and that many years must elapse before the population of the annexed district will be large enough to justify the establishment of public pleasure-grounds in the Twenty-third and Twenty-fourth Wards and the adjoining territory of Westchester. The reply to this objection is that this is a question in which the whole city is interested, and that the larger parks which have been located north of the Harlem river, as shown on the accompanying map, are for the whole people, while only the smaller spaces are for the benefit and use of the immediate locality. Had such arguments prevailed over a quarter of a century ago, the City of New York would now be without the grand park which is to-day the pride of its citizens; and our only breathing places would be a few public squares, or so-called parks, unworthy the name.

As we have shown in another part of this paper, Central Park, viewed in a financial aspect alone, has proved a most profitable investment for the city, a magnificent real estate speculation, which has netted the public treasury millions of dollars over and above even the most prodigal expenditures. Millions, it is true, were spent on works that could have been dispensed with, and which, in the proposed parks that are to be of a rural character, will be wholly unnecessary. Though Central Park was designed originally as a public pleasure-ground solely, and not for show; as a place for the recreation of *all* the people, free from restrictions save such as were necessary for the preservation of a proper degree of neatness and order, the public enjoyment

of it is, except when official permission is given, rigidly confined to its roads and drives and walks, under prohibition and penalty.

The observant visitor cannot fail to see that Central Park is wholly inadequate to the wants of our present population, that at certain seasons and certain hours of the day it is overcrowded with vehicles, the number of which, it is estimated, has doubled within the past five years. Yet, as we shall see, the most determined opposition was organized against it during the years of agitation that preceded the enactment of the bill for its establishment; but who contends to-day that it has been other than a benefit to the people, and one of the very few great public works that has more than paid for the outlay? Who, of all those who so fiercely opposed it, would consent to its abolishment? If the question were now put to public vote, is it likely there would be one ballot for its discontinuance?

We have said that the Central is wholly inadequate to the wants of our present population, and we may also say, much as it is to be regretted, that the time is fast approaching when its dimensions must, *in obedience to the imperative necessities of business, be materially reduced*. When the vacant spaces which still remain on the east and west sides of the park are covered with buildings, the number of transverse roads which form the only means of communication through the park between those sections of the city must be increased, and the area of our one great park reduced in compliance with the stern necessities of business. Indeed, the first step has already been taken in this direction, and a new transverse road is about to be opened.

Can it, in view of these facts, be rationally argued that the present movement for an enlargement of our park area is premature in a city whose population has increased from a half million to a million and a half since our first great park was proposed?



Bronx Park—DeLancey's Ancient Pine.

In the meanwhile, as we have shown in these pages, we have been surpassed by several cities which have followed and improved upon our example. Within this period the taxable value of our real estate has increased from three hundred millions to one billion two hundred and seventy-seven millions, but while the city has advanced in wealth and population, the addition to our park area, as shown by the figures, has been comparatively insignificant.

It has been urged as an argument against the proposed increase, that the insular situation of New York, bounded by two great rivers, secures an abundance of fresh air; but the tens of thousands of dwellers on our water-front, who occupy long lines of tenement houses, and who breathe the air which sweeps over the fetid outpour of sewers and the poisonous refuse of factories and gas houses, filth, and abominations that are ever on the increase, would, if consulted on the subject, soon dispel any such illusion. The North and East rivers cannot in any sense be regarded as substitutes for parks. Let it be admitted that they purify the air; they afford no playground for the children, no opportunity for the exercises of athletic clubs, no parade-ground for the militia, no drive for horses and vehicles, no promenade for our adult population, no shady retreats, no expanse of "sight-refreshing green," "the livery Nature still delights to wear," for the enjoyment and recreation of pic-nic, excursion, and other social parties.

We would suggest, moreover, that something more than pure air, essential as that is, is required; health-giving physical recreation is also necessary; and where can the mass of our population look for this, but to the people's summer resorts—the great rural parks—which are certainly as necessary to the American metropolis as they are to London, or Paris, or Vienna, or any of the other European capitals?

It has also been urged, as a reason why this question of more public parks should be kept in abeyance for some years, that the pressing need for an increase in our supply of Croton water must be immediately considered and provided for. Your Commission, in common with the rest of their fellow-citizens, recognize and appreciate the urgency of this important work, and they fully concur in the views expressed as to the imperative necessity for its accomplishment at the earliest day. They would be the last to counsel delay or to throw obstacles in the way of its speedy completion. But, for the all-sufficient reasons stated, and which are based on the success of Central Park in financial results, they believe that the proposed rural pleasure-grounds would aid in furnishing the means and defraying the expense of the costly works required for an increase of our water supply. From the greatly enhanced value of the land, which, as experience in New York and other cities affords conclusive evidence, has invariably attended the creation of parks, the city will derive from year to year an increased income that will materially lighten the expense of necessary public works.

The importance of the subject demands for it the earnest consideration of your Honorable Bodies, affecting, as it does in a peculiar degree, the interests of the metropolis; for if by an outlay of five or six millions of dollars, in a matter of such vital importance to the public health, our city will realize, within ten years, more than the cost of the land in the income from increased taxation consequent on the largely enhanced value of the property adjacent to the parks, so much will have been obtained toward the reduction of other expenses. In Boston, Philadelphia and other cities this fact has been turned to profitable account. More land having been purchased than was absolutely required, the surplus was sold at an advanced valuation, producing from five to ten times the amount originally paid;

for this land, fronting on the parks, constituted the most valuable portion of the property. Such, it may be stated here, as an illustration, was the result of the vast improvement conceived and carried out in the French capital by Baron Haussman. Under the system devised by that distinguished engineer a large section of the city was purchased by the government, the buildings removed, spacious thoroughfares opened, and such improvements made in the locality selected that the municipal treasury was much more than reimbursed for the outlay, realizing a handsome profit on the sales of lots, on which splendid structures took the place of unsightly and unhealthy buildings, the resort, in some cases, of the worst portion of the community.

If, in the case of Central Park, a space extending to a width of five or six hundred feet from the present boundary had been included in the area appropriated, and disposed of five or six or ten years after the passage of the bill, enough would have been realized from the sale to have more than paid for all the land taken. A reference to the tax valuation shows that the increase in the value of the adjoining property exceeded even the most sanguine anticipations. For the advantage of location and the enhanced value of their land the adjacent owners were obliged to pay a proportionate tax rate. That similar results will follow the establishment of the parks now located there cannot be a reasonable doubt. As a mere financial speculation for the city, as a means of enabling it to meet other and necessary expenditures, and, above all, as a provision that should be made in time for the sanitary well-being of the population, there should be no hesitation in regard to the proposed extension of our park area.

PARKS AS A PROFITABLE MUNICIPAL INVESTMENT—A NOTABLE
INSTANCE—FROM THREE THOUSAND DOLLARS TO
OVER A MILLION AND A QUARTER.

Among the important considerations growing out of, and intimately connected with, the proposed enlargement of the parks of the metropolis, is the effect it must inevitably produce on the taxable value of real estate in the immediate vicinity of the sites selected. In every instance, as experience has invariably proved, not alone in New York, but in other cities, the creation of parks has been followed by a large addition to the municipal revenues, increasing steadily year by year as the area of improvement and population extended.

The history of the establishment of Central Park furnishes a notable instance of the correctness of the statement. When the question of the creation of that popular and now deservedly celebrated pleasure-ground was agitated, the proposition led to a fierce and bitter controversy. Among its determined opponents the large real estate owners were conspicuous by their hostility, and determined in their opposition. They contended that it would bankrupt the city treasury; that it would prove a curse instead of a blessing to the city; that the insular position of New York, bounded by two great rivers, rendered it wholly unnecessary as a sanitary measure, and that it would be a resort for the worst characters of the metropolis. They sent delegation after delegation to the Legislature, and their agents were untiring in their efforts to defeat the bill for its creation. But the friends and promoters of the project had faith in the good work in which they were engaged, and confidence in its ultimate success, and after a protracted contest of four years the law creating Central Park was enacted.

The result more than justified the most sanguine expectations of the friends and advocates of that truly beneficent work. Standing second in its importance and consequence only to the introduction of the Croton water in its effect upon the public health, it has far surpassed that great work in its financial results. From the moment it was reasonably certain that the desired legislation would be obtained and that the advocates of the park would be successful, a marked improvement was perceptible in the value of the territory in which its site was to be located. Real estate advanced fifty per cent. in some localities, and this only in anticipation of the passage of the act; so eager were purchasers to take advantage of the expected increase. Speculators were quick to perceive and improve the opportunity, and the competition became so active that in a single year there was in some localities a three-fold increase.

In the pamphlet issued by the New York Park Association, and which contains much valuable information collected from official sources bearing upon this particular point, a striking instance is given of the unprecedented rise in the values of real estate in the Wards wherein the Central Park was located. The property in question is bounded by Seventy-eighth and Seventy-ninth streets and Fifth and Madison avenues, which, in 1852, the year preceding the passage of the bill, had been sold for three thousand dollars. On the prospect of the success of the movement by the enactment of the proposed bill in the Legislature of 1853, the tract was disposed of for four thousand five hundred dollars, and when the expected legislation had been secured it was resold for ten thousand dollars, having advanced within a brief twelve months over three hundred per cent. Within four years, in 1857, a still greater increase took place in the value of this particular block, Mr. George Douglass having purchased it for forty

thousand dollars. Thus, in the comparatively brief period of five years, the enhanced value of the property showed the extraordinary increase of over thirteen hundred per cent.

It would be absurd to attribute such a rapid rise to any other cause than the establishment of our great metropolitan park. It certainly was not produced by the growth of population, for at that time a large territory south of Forty-second street was still unoccupied, and one of the principal arguments, one of the strongest objections urged against the establishment of a park so far north, was its distance from the centre of population and the difficulty of access. Many of those who had been most strenuous and pronounced in their opposition all through the controversy were among the first to take advantage of the advance and profit by the opportunity. In 1857, as stated, the piece of land referred to was sold for forty thousand dollars; *twelve years after, the owner, Mr. George Douglass, refused one million two hundred and fifty thousand dollars for his property from Mr. Vanderbilt.* Nor was this the only offer for the same property—another of the same amount was subsequently offered and declined. A still higher value is placed upon the property to-day.

We do not propose to follow the rapid acceleration of values throughout the territory in which the park was located. It is sufficient for our purpose to show that such an increase was mainly due to the wise foresight and judicious legislation to which we are to-day indebted for one of the most attractive and valuable institutions of our great city. We may, however, state without going into details, that lots on the thoroughfares bounding the park and on the streets in the immediate vicinity were sold and re-sold, changing owners at prices varying from one hundred to twenty, thirty, forty, fifty, sixty, and in some instances to one hundred thousand dollars. The real estate market never experienced such a period of activity, and the Tax



Bronx Park—The Woodland Mirror.

Department of the city was obliged year after year to make marked changes in the figures showing the values of the property surrounding the park. Whatever doubts might have been entertained with regard to the effect produced on the city's income, or of the sustained influence which this one great improvement exercised on real estate values, were speedily dispelled by the records of this department,—by what has been so forcibly and expressively termed “the illuminating and informative virtue of statistics.”

TESTIMONY FROM NEW YORK'S OFFICIAL RECORDS.

In 1850 the taxable value of the Twelfth Ward, as shown by the books of the Tax Assessors, amounted to \$8,356,265. This ward comprised the whole territory, which was subsequently sub-divided into three wards, known as the Twelfth, Nineteenth and Twenty-second.

In 1853, by the purchase of the land for the park, making, with one hundred and forty acres required for the Croton reservoir, and which had been previously secured by the Croton Aqueduct Department, a total of 864 acres, a large tract was withdrawn from the taxable area of the city. Under other circumstances so great a reduction in the amount of taxable property must have been attended with a corresponding decrease in the city's revenue from this source ; but in this case the contrary effect was produced.

The acquisition of this territory and its dedication to the use of the people was attended by the most beneficial results to the financial interests of the city. The increase which followed the enactment of the law in 1853 is shown in the following table giving the taxable values in the three wards every five years :

	Twelfth.	Nineteenth.	Twenty-second.	Totals.
1856.....	\$8,149,360	\$8,041,183	\$10,239,022	\$26,429,565
1861.....	12,454,375	16,986,152	17,666,866	47,107,393
1866.....	18,381,650	37,636,050	24,052,715	80,070,415
1871.....	50,362,925	77,771,930	57,666,340	185,801,195
1876.....	67,238,660	119,156,555	66,449,640	252,844,855
1881.....	85,573,039	152,303,375	74,686,475	312,562,889

From 1850 to 1856 the increase amounted to \$18,073,300, and from 1856 to 1881, a quarter of a century, it reached the enormous aggregate of \$286,133,324. Despite the financial revulsion of 1857, the effects of which were felt for many years after, the value of property in those wards had advanced over twenty-one millions of dollars, an increase of about eighty per cent., while in the rest of the city as shown by the records of the same department in the table given below, the increase was a little more than twelve per cent :

	Upper Wards.	Rest of City.
1856.....	\$26,429,565	\$314,542,533
1861.....	47,107,393	359,848,272
1866.....	80,070,415	398,924,519
1871.....	185,801,195	583,505,215
1876.....	252,844,855	639,452,160
1881.....	312,562,889	664,172,310

But it is in a comparison of the increased value of real estate in the three upper wards with the assessed value of the other nineteen wards that the contrast becomes so significant and suggestive. While the increase in the first instance was thirteen hundred per cent., or at the rate of fifty per cent. a year, in the latter the increase was about two-fold, or a little more than one hundred per cent. It may be said that this increase was largely due to the growth of population, but it is a most significant fact, as bearing upon this particular point, that within the very period in which this great advance took place in the three upper wards, that is from 1853 to 1870, the whole country was passing through a gigantic civil war, the destructive effects of which on human life and in keeping down the natural increase of our population was proved in a peculiarly painful and emphatic manner by the census statistics.

While the increase during the decade from 1850, when the census returns credited the city with 515,547 inhabitants,

to 1860, when it had 813,669, was 58 per cent., the percentage of increase in the succeeding ten years from 1860 to 1870 was but 16 per cent., the population of 1860 being 813,669, and in 1870, 942,292. In fact, long before population began to extend in an appreciable degree to the territory surrounding the park, the value of real estate was rapidly approaching its maximum. In 1873 the prostration of trade and general commercial depression caused a shrinkage of values, but the city had in the meantime derived a largely augmented income from that section. The objection urged that these values were to a large extent prospective in their character only serves to prove the correctness of the assertion that the greatly enhanced value of property in the wards named, and during the period stated, was mainly due to the creation of Central Park.

Assuming that the advance in the three upper wards kept exact pace with the balance of the city, which from 1856 to 1881 was a little more than two-fold, their assessed value would be less than sixty millions of dollars, or about one-fifth of the other nineteen wards. But, as much of this is of course to be attributed to the settlement and building up of this territory, it is impossible to arrive at exact results.

Comptroller Hawes in his report for the year 1858 says that "the increase in the amount of taxes accruing to the city in consequence of the enhancement in value of real estate situated in the upper part of the island, over and above the formal value of the land now withdrawn from taxation on account of the opening of this noble park, will, it is thought, afford more than sufficient means for the payment of the interest on the debt incurred for its purchase and improvement *without any increase in the general rate of taxation.*" Time has more than proved the correctness of this statement, for the amount received yearly from the

increased tax income from the three wards constitutes one-third of the whole tax levy of the city.

THE CITY MAKES SEVENTEEN MILLIONS OF DOLLARS, AND ACQUIRES LAND WORTH TWO HUNDRED MILLIONS

From a calculation of the increased tax income derived from the territory surrounding Central Park, it is estimated that the city received seventeen millions of dollars over the cost of the land, the interest on the bonds, the expense of maintenance, improvements, etc., since the law for its creation was enacted. For the land the amount paid was \$6,666,-381; on construction account, \$9,873,844; for maintenance, \$6,500,000; for interest during twenty-five years, \$20,755,-925; making a total of \$43,794,150. During this period the aggregate amount of taxes collected in these wards, as approximately calculated, was \$110,000,000. Estimating fifty millions of this as due to the increase from ordinary causes, there would be \$60,000,000 left, and after deducting the park expenses, the balance to the credit of the city would reach the handsome net profit of *seventeen millions of dollars*, on this magnificent real estate transaction.

This, however, was the least portion of the gain, for in addition to the increased income, by which the city was enabled not only to meet the excessive expenditure on the construction and maintenance account, and to put millions into the municipal treasury toward defraying other expenses, she acquired a tract of land valued at *two hundred millions of dollars*.

This is the financial result of the establishment of Central Park, and that similar effects will follow the enlargement of the park area in the Twenty-third and Twenty-fourth Wards and on the Sound, does not admit of a doubt. It is possible to purchase in that section of the city to-day over three thousand acres, or four times the area of the Central

Park, for about the amount paid for that tract, minus the space required for the reservoirs.

Between the Central and the proposed parks there will be a marked difference. While the one may be regarded to a great extent as artificial and ornamental, and as such imposing a heavy maintenance expense, the others will be rural or suburban in their character, requiring a minimum of expenditure. The site of the Central was probably the roughest and most unattractive portion of the island, and involved great labor and expense to bring it to its present condition. To maintain it in this condition requires a large yearly appropriation; but it is a charge to which the people do not object, as it is justly regarded as the most attractive ornament of the city.

"The Park," said a New York paper, describing it in 1860, seven years after the passage of the bill providing for the taking of the land, "the Park when purchased by the city was a straggling suburb, covered with low, squalid houses, inhabited by a class of persons whose occupations were really nuisances in the eye of the law. Heaps of cinders, potshreds and broken bricks were scattered here and there, and, in short, the ground was used as a sort of repository for all sorts of rubbish. * * * This unsightly spot of ground is *neither a park, a stone yard, nor a piece of waste ground*, though by times it reminds you of all these. * * * After three years' labor and the expenditure of *millions of dollars* New York is almost *as parkless now as ever*. For all practical purposes the Central Park is at present useless, and there seems to be not the slightest probability that it will answer the real purpose for which New Yorkers need a park *for years to come*. Incomplete, unfinished, with only promises here and there of good things to come, with no shade, with walks and drives beginning in dust, running along sand banks and stone yards, and ending, like humanity, in dust again, the Cen-

tral Park, instead of attracting a greater number of visitors, is losing its *habitués* who flock away to Jones' Wood, to Hoboken, to any place where there is shade, and it is visited now only by a few rural strangers who go to see the Park as they go to see Barnum's, or any other of our city sights."

The lands recommended for park sites in the Twenty-third and Twenty-fourth Wards and vicinity, and on the Sound, form natural parks, as will appear from the descriptions in this report, and the necessary outlay to fit them for occupation will be proportionately small as compared with the cost of the artificial and expensive work performed on the Central Park, which as above stated *was not ready for public use for many years after its purchase*. In the case of the Bronx and Van Cortlandt, St. Mary's, Crotona, Claremont and Pelham Bay Parks, the moment the land is acquired they will be ready for immediate use ; indeed, we have no hesitation in predicting that immediately after the enactment of the law, they will be visited by hundreds of thousands of our fellow-citizens.

CORROBORATIVE EVIDENCE FROM OTHER CITIES.

The effect of parks on real estate values, although particularly pronounced in our own metropolis, has been hardly less marked in other cities. From Boston, Chicago, Buffalo, Baltimore and other cities, your Commission is in receipt of testimony of a similar character. In March of 1882, Mr. D. Rayhice, Secretary to the Park Commission of Baltimore, wrote as follows to the Secretary of the New York Park Association: "Druid Hill Park, purchased in 1860, is not within the city limits, but is separated from it by some three-eighths of a mile, which was formerly without a



Bronx Park—The Trout Pool,

dwelling for that distance. There are now rows of handsome dwellings lining the roads leading to the park. The cost of the land within the park limits was somewhat less than \$1,000 an acre. The surrounding property is now held at rates vastly higher. Before the park was opened the Commission gave for an undivided interest \$500 an acre; they have since had to pay \$3,000, and more than that when they had to condemn land within the park. Rough hillside lots, which would scarcely have found a purchaser are now held at \$3,000 in the expectation that the Commission will have to pay the price to secure the property which juts into the park. That the increased value is very great is so palpable that no one doubts it."

From Mr. H. W. Harmon, Secretary of the Chicago Department, confirmatory evidence was received that "*the immediate* effect was to double and quadruple property values."

Mr. Wm. McMillan, Superintendent of the Buffalo Parks, stated that the increase in the Seventh, Eleventh and Twelfth Wards, in which the parks are situated, is 370 per cent.

The experience of the Boston Commissioners has been no less gratifying. They, too, have devoted particular attention to this phase of the subject, and recognizing its importance have collected evidence no less convincing than that already presented. Of their own city they say, that in 1876 they expressed the belief that money expended in this direction would be "well invested and quickly returned by betterments and by the increase in value of all kinds of surrounding property." They inform us that the assessed value of lands adjoining Back Bay Park in 1877 was \$11,143,751, and that 1881 showed an increase of \$18,813,649, yielding an augmented revenue of \$122,500; "which," they add, "is the present monetary value of the park as affecting the city's income, representing a value of

\$3,000,000, at four per cent., and which justifies the opinion heretofore expressed by the Board *that the park is not a tax upon the city at large, but that the increased taxes from the surrounding property pays its cost.* The increase of valuation is upon land alone, and does not include the buildings. The valuation of the land in the rest of the city during the same time, 1877 to 1881, was reduced \$27,621,449. New buildings have been erected upon this territory since 1877 (which was valued by the assessors in 1881 at \$3,992,300), which are due, in a large measure, to the influence of the park, and from which the city derives an income this year of \$55,492."

A reference to the description of the parks of Brooklyn, which will be found under its appropriate caption further on in this report, adds still greater weight to the testimony on this point and shows that the same financial results followed in this instance, as in every other, the appropriation of large tracts of lands for public pleasure grounds.

MODE OF PAYMENT—THE PARKS WILL MORE THAN PAY
FOR THEMSELVES AND LEAVE THE TITLE IN
THE CITY, FREE OF COST.

One of the first and strongest objections which have been urged against the enlargement of the park area of New York is the heavy expense, which, it is said, it must necessarily entail upon the city and the onerous burden it would impose upon the taxpayers. That there should be more parks is conceded and that it is wise to purchase the required land while it can be secured at the lowest price, is also admitted; but it is contended that the debt of the city should not be increased and that any measure which adds to its present bulk should receive the most careful consideration. Your Commission fully appreciating the importance of the work in which they have been engaged

and to which they have given much thought and labor and a thorough examination, have arrived at the conclusion that the present is the most favorable time of all the times to come, for the increase of the area of our recreation grounds, that for the reasons stated elsewhere in their report and which are sustained by official and financial statements, the outlay instead of being a burden on the city will, as experience has proved in our own case and that of other cities, afford a largely increased revenue and result in equalizing the rate of taxation.

It is obvious from the history of parks here and elsewhere that property adjacent thereto is largely benefited, and that the benefit conferred is proportioned to its proximity. The increase of value varying, as we have shown, from two hundred fold to an almost incredible amount, has not only greatly augmented the income of the city, but it has helped its municipal government to defray other and unavoidable expenses, particularly those of necessary public works. The facts and conclusions are so clear and convincing that they leave no room for doubt or misapprehension on this point. If a lot bordering on the park is worth, for instance, \$1,000 before the location of the site, and its value is thereafter doubled, the taxes are proportionately increased, and every subsequent advance inures not only to the benefit of the city treasury, but to the advantage of property in other wards by equalizing the rate of taxation. Thus, as we have shown, while property in nineteen wards increased only two-fold from 1856 to 1881, the taxable value of the three wards in which the Central Park was located advanced *from about twenty-six and a half millions to over three hundred and twelve millions on the same property, an increase of TWELVE HUNDRED PER CENT., CONTRIBUTING ONE-THIRD OF THE EXPENSES OF THE WHOLE CITY.* So that this great pleasure-ground not only paid the interest on its bonds at seven per cent. *but the cost*

of maintenance and the principal, leaving a large surplus to the profit side of the account besides the land.

It should be particularly noted here that while the bonds issued for the purchase of the land of the Central Park and the work of construction paid seven per cent. interest, the rate of interest to-day is one-half that figure, or three and one-half per cent., and that no loan will be required for construction account, as nature has already performed that part of the work. If, therefore, the purchase price is paid by city bonds, the payment, coming from taxation on largely increased values, is as equally distributed as it can possibly be, for such taxation is in proportion to the increase in the value of property.

This mode of payment seems the fairer and more equitable for the additional reasons that the surrounding property will come in for assessments for streets, and other improvements by which the city at large will be benefited; and, besides, when all is done, the absolute title to the land embraced in the parks, will belong, not to the neighboring owners, but, with all its enhanced and enhancing values, *to the city itself*. There does not seem any fair reason why the owners in the vicinity of the parks should pay a part of the purchase price of property to be absolutely vested in the city.

The testimony from other cities is of the same conclusive character, particularly in the case of the Back Bay Park of Boston, a tract of over one hundred acres, the result proving, in the words of the Park Commissioners of that City (already quoted), *"that the park is not a tax upon the city at large, but that increased taxation from the surrounding property pays its cost."* Moreover, while these parks would not only be paid for out of the increased revenue derived from the enhancement of taxable values, there would be a surplus to be devoted to the construction of necessary public works, such as the new Croton aqueduct,—and probably enough to

discharge the entire cost thereof—and the city itself would have in addition large areas of land, like the Central Park, —but five times larger—worth hundreds of millions of dollars.

While it may be urged that the analogy between the Central Park and the parks herein recommended, is, in one respect, not wholly sustained, in regard to enhancement of taxable values, for the reasons :

First.—That any increase of value of the lands north of Van Cortlandt Park would inure to the benefit of Yonkers, instead of New York (which, however, would not apply, should that portion of Yonkers, as it probably soon will, gravitate to our own city) ;

Second.—While it is true, that that portion of the lands, on the west of this park, which constitute Woodlawn Cemetery would not give the city treasury the benefit of any increased taxation; and

Third.—That Pelham Bay Park, being so largely embraced by the water of the Sound, could only enhance those lands which neighbor it, outside of Pelham Neck (though this would not apply to the lands of City Island lying southwesterly of Pelham Neck);—yet it may be answered, with more or less effect, that residential lands along the coast would, after the establishment of Pelham Bay Park, be the most enviable and valuable of any within the city; and that the restriction of benefit in any one direction, would tend to make the enhancement greater in every other.

When, on the other hand, it is remembered that the purchase price of Central Park, small as the acreage is, was nearly as large as the price of the large domain herein recommended will be; and that the expenditure for putting it in order and maintaining it for thirty years, has been far greater than will be required for the same purpose through an equal time, for these natural parks; and also, that, not-

withstanding the restrictions above mentioned, there will yet be around the 3,500 acres of the new parks a much larger quantity of vicinage lands to be benefited, than there was around the 864 acres of the Central Park, it must needs follow, that, in the next thirty years, the relative proportion, and indeed the absolute total of enhancement of taxable values, caused by these new parks, will be far greater than that which has resulted from the Central.

THE MORAL ASPECT OF THE QUESTION—THE REMEDY FOR A GREAT EVIL.

Having dwelt so long upon the material advantages resulting from the creation of parks, the physical benefit to the people and the pecuniary gain to the city treasury, it will not be deemed irrelevant or out of place to refer to the higher and larger profits to be derived from them. True these profits cannot be calculated in dollars and cents; they cannot be converted into capital of any kind; they cannot be weighed in any material balance, but they are none the less real and valuable on that account. Anything that tends to refine the manners and elevate the character of a people is an inestimable advantage, and the government that recognizes this fact and acts upon it, that provides its people with rural resorts, spacious and picturesque, may expend less money on prisons and reformatories. The more parks, the fewer penitentiaries; the more pleasure-grounds, the fewer hospitals.

It is conceded that confined dwellings and fetid air and gases have a deadly effect upon the moral as well as the physical nature of man; that in such places vice flourishes as weeds in a rank, congenial soil; that there boys and girls graduate and take their degrees in the criminal sciences, and it is equally and indisputably true that contact with nature has a regenerating effect, that it invigorates the



Bronx Park—The River Glade.

frame, purifies the heart, and stimulates the intellect. It is impossible to overestimate its silent influence. It is no wonder that the Greeks and Romans peopled their woods and hills and streams with gregarious deities. That was their mode of accounting for the influence nature exercises over man, for the elevation it imparts to his thoughts, the wings it lends to his imagination. Of course we sneer at such "mythologic stuff," but even while doing so, we can imagine airy, fanciful creations springing into full perfection from the pen or pencil of some future artist, in words or colors, whose first inspiration came to him under "the windows of the sky" in some spacious suburban pleasure-ground. One of the speakers who addressed a public meeting held by your Commission justly claimed for parks an educating influence upon the people; "Art," he tersely said, "had had its ups and downs and critics had fallen foul of it, but as yet no critic had tackled nature. No man ever got so old, or woman so unpoetic, as not to be able to appreciate great landscapes." Human beings are so constituted that the surroundings from which one gains health and strength and beauty may impart to another original ideas on art or science, high thoughts on duties and responsibilities, lofty projects of benevolence, or daring schemes of adventure. But the surroundings that produce such results are not to be found in the overcrowded tenement districts, with their offensive odors and pestilential atmosphere that sap the vigor of the body and the strength of the mind. Then should not Christian feeling and patriotic spirit combine, and acting together force an outlet through which our working population may emerge into the mind-developing, body-strengthening air and sunlight?

We cannot help, in this connection, recurring to a subject so fraught with vital importance to hundreds of thousands of the dwellers of the great metropolis

—the tenement-house—where men, women, boys and girls, the infant of a day and the octogenarian, are crammed, layer over layer, into close, confined, un-ventilated rooms; where privacy is unknown; the seat of disease and the hotbed of evil; a feature of New York, and of no other city in the civilized world. It was a necessity of our limitations. Our population was bounded by water-walls, and could not stretch beyond, and so—for it must grow—it was obliged to pile up, story above story, and crowd into narrower spaces. No one can realize the sufferings of the denizens of some of these miserable abodes without a shudder.

But New York has broken through her barriers on the north and east; reclaimed many of her people who had fled to New Jersey and Long Island, and invites them and the crowds, packed like sardines in her tenement-houses, to fresh air, to pleasant views, to field and wood, to health and joy in her new domain. Centralize her business—for that cheapens the cost of its transaction; decentralize and diffuse her population—for that gives health, comfort, and the capacity to toil.

It should be understood that the parks are not for any particular "class"—so called. The objectionable term "poorer classes" has been used without a proper regard to the meaning of the words, or the odious distinction which they imply. In this land, thank Heaven! the people are not divided into classes, and in the matter of public parks it is the interest and welfare of the whole people which is considered. The "poor man" of to-day, with the opportunities which this free land places within the reach of talent and well directed energy, may be the millionaire of to-morrow.

THE SITES SELECTED.

VAN CORTLANDT PARK AND LAKE.

Your Commission has, after many visits and minute examination of the section of the city comprised within the Twenty-third and Twenty-fourth Wards, been most favorably impressed with the tract known as the Van Cortlandt estate, and its immediate surroundings, as possessing, in its varied topography, ample spaces, charming views, cheapness, natural condition, and peculiar adaptability for park purposes. Over a thousand acres can here be obtained in one tract, presenting a remarkable combination of forest, hill and valley, rock and glen, meadow, lake and stream. It is in fact a natural park, requiring but little outlay to fit it for immediate use. Although at the northern extremity of the Twenty-fourth Ward, it can be reached within half an hour, even now, by rail from the Grand Central depot, and the New York City and Northern Railroad passes immediately through it to Yonkers, conveying to it visitors from the present most densely populated portions of the city in much less than an hour. But the centre of dense population moves so rapidly northward, that it will take but a few years to bring its border on the Van Cortlandt Park.

The Hudson River Railroad runs within less than a mile of its western boundary, while the Harlem Railroad is within the same distance of its eastern limit; and when the Harlem river improvements shall have been completed, large steamers can approach its southern extremity, and place their passengers within fifteen minutes' walk of its grounds. If the contemplated Arcade Railroad shall be built, it will

lessen the time between the Battery and Van Cortlandt Park, to thirty minutes. It is in point of time much nearer to the centre of population than the Central Park when it was purchased by the city, and with this great advantage in its favor, that when secured through the required forms of law, as provided for in the accompanying bill, it can be thrown open at once to the people. Little expense need be incurred beyond that absolutely necessary for the laying out and construction of some miles of additional roads and walks and the maintenance of a proper degree of neatness and order.

The Park Department have already outlined about 200 acres of this tract of land including the lake, and by the filing of the map as required by law it has been dedicated to public use as a park. But as the area should, in the opinion of your Commission, be enlarged, and, as experience has shown, the proceedings to obtain title may not be had for years, the tract in question having been located and designated on the official maps four or five years ago, and no steps yet taken in this direction either in this case or that of the proposed Bronx park, the needs of the city and true economy demand that the property which is daily accumulating value, should be secured *at the earliest day*. The necessity of speedy action has been shown in the case of the addition to Central Park, and which, in consequence of the serious mistake that had been made in delaying its acquisition, cost five times as much per acre as the northern portion of the original and larger tract.

The advantages afforded by the Van Cortlandt Park consist not only in its diversified and picturesque landscape, but in the spacious parade ground of nearly one hundred and twenty acres, and a level stretch of land extending in one straight line to a length of over fifteen hundred yards, which at little cost can be converted into a most desirable rifle range.

The lake of pure fresh water is supplied by the ever-dwelling brook known by its Indian title of the Mosholu, as well as by several natural springs. It covers an extent of sixty acres, which can be easily increased by artificial means to a surface of at least one hundred, forming one of the chief attractions of the landscape. As the supply of water is continuous no danger from malaria is to be apprehended like that which, it is said, arises from the stagnant water in one at least of the Central Park lakes, to which attention has been repeatedly directed by the press. The brook is capable of being readily widened, and may be made to form a particularly interesting feature in the general plan of the park.

If thrown open throughout its whole extent, the people can enjoy themselves strolling over its broad plains and rambling through its well-shaded woods, and over its sightly knolls, and the cost of keeping it in a condition suitable to such general use need be comparatively trifling. No expensive embellishments, no costly structures would be required; the place can depend on its natural advantages. On every side are spread landscapes that would delight an artist's eye. Looking south from the ancient mansion, with its grotesque corbels and quaint devices, nearly a century and a half old, a magnificent view is had of the Spuyten Duyvil Valley, with the flanking hills on either side, and occasional glimpses of the great city to the south. Less than ten minutes by rail is the gigantic and graceful structure of High Bridge, a continuation of the Croton Aqueduct that passes directly through the Van Cortlandt estate from north to south. The extensive lawn in front of the dwelling descends by a series of terraces into the valley below; a relic of the old Dutch style of landscape gardening. To the east of the mansion there are several fine evergreens and a line of grand old chestnuts that were planted nearly a century ago. From the hills that over-

look the lake, the towering Palisades of the Hudson are visible, with the noble river flowing at their base, while to the north the County of Westchester discloses many a varied, extensive and picturesque scene.

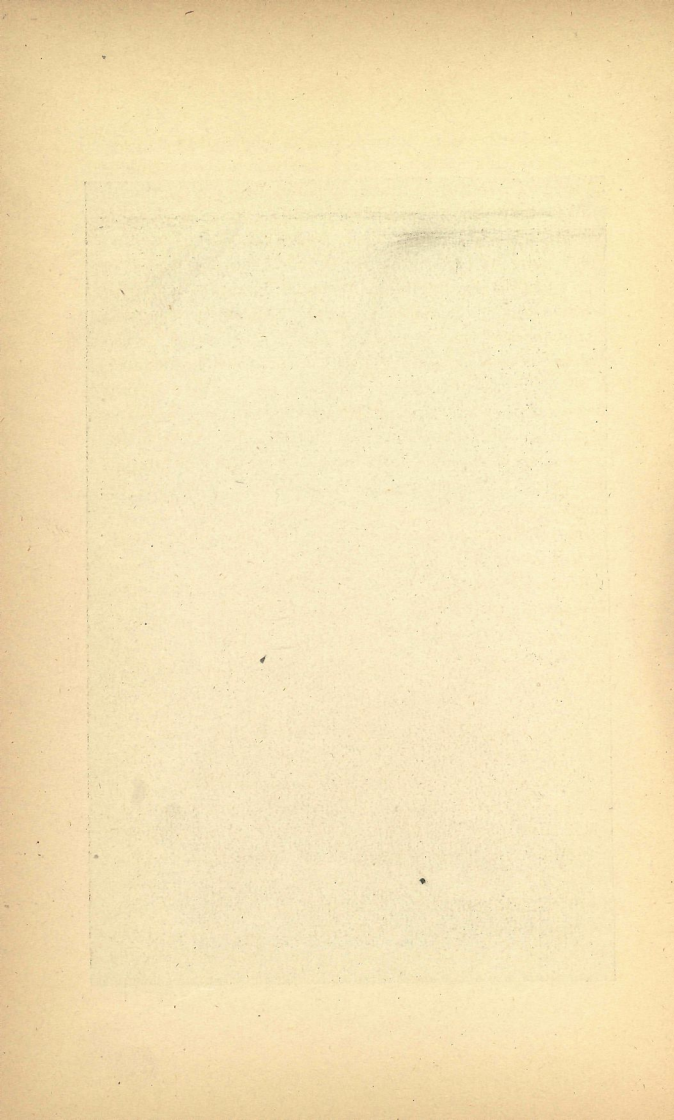
Within the area selected by your Commission can be found an extensive tract of land for a reservoir of ample capacity to supply the hundreds of thousands of residents who will, in the near future, occupy this portion of the Twenty-fourth Ward. Indeed, the necessity of making such provision in time has already been suggested to the Croton Aqueduct Commission by prominent citizens, and the subject is referred to here as of special importance in connection with the question of our future water supply.

It is worthy of note that our reservoirs have heretofore been placed within our park limits, and in the present instance the Van Cortlandt Park has not only the advantage of location, but the required topographical conditions to recommend it for this special purpose—with natural ranges, instead of artificial embankments, on two sides of the reservoir. We may add that the line of the new Croton aqueduct, as projected by the Commission, runs directly through this park from north to south, a circumstance which, in its relation to the reservoir question, is regarded by your Commission as deserving of particular consideration. The fact that there is on this tract an inexhaustible supply of stone which would be available in the work of construction, affords an additional and substantial reason in favor of its appropriation by the city. A portion of the stone of which the present Croton aqueduct was constructed, was obtained from this land, and the City has been, for several years paying the proprietor a royalty for the supply obtained from his quarries.

On the map of this portion of the city, filed in the Park Department, the streets laid out within the space which your Commission has indicated as eminently adapted for



Bronx Park—In the Woods.



this rural park extend to an aggregate length of twenty-five miles, involving in the work of construction, consisting of opening, grading, regulating, paving, flagging, guttering and sewerage, a cost per mile, according to a reasonable estimate—based on experience—of \$150,000, or a total street expense for this tract of one thousand acres, of nearly \$4,000,000. If the land should be appropriated for public use in the manner designated, at least three-fourths of this expense will be avoided, and a great saving to the city and the owners of property in this ward be effected. So that the cost of laying out and completing the required streets through this tract, if the same should not be taken for a park, will be far more than the cost of *the title to the entire grounds*, if taken for a park. When, in addition to this saving, the enhancement of the value of the land by reason of its proximity to the park is considered, there can be but one conclusion as to the pecuniary advantage resulting to the city.

The same remarks are applicable, and of equal force, in regard to all the other parks recommended.

A PARADE GROUND AND RIFLE RANGE FOR THE NATIONAL GUARD.

By the appropriation of the Van Cortlandt estate and a portion of the contiguous land, the First Division of the National Guard will, for the first time in their history, have at their command a space sufficient for their proper education in the practical duties of the citizen soldier. They have, for years, been dependent on the courtesy of the Brooklyn authorities on the occasion of special parades, and every effort which has been made to supply this deficiency has been unsuccessful. When the Central Park was laid out it was understood that an ample tract would be set apart for their use; but the pledge, whether given

or merely implied, was never kept; nor, indeed, was there any adequate space within its drives and walks for military evolutions on a large scale. By special enactment a piece of land in another locality was appropriated, but the law was subsequently repealed and their claims have ever since been systematically ignored. It is to be hoped that the present opportunity to make amends for this unworthy treatment will not be neglected. We owe at least this return to that efficient and excellent organization which is ever ready when danger threatens the good order and peace of society, to risk the lives of its members for the protection of life and property, and whose name is a "tower of strength" and a defence.

The location of a parade ground within the park does not mean that it shall be exclusively occupied as such, or that its use shall be confined to the military. At all times when it is not required for the purposes to which it is to be specially applied, it will be open to the people for physical exercise, for all athletic sports and games, while picnics, excursions and other parties will have ample space for social enjoyment and healthful recreation.

Such a space would become a resort for athletic and sportive games by clubs from many cities of the Union.

Apart, however, from the right to the use and occupation of a portion of the proposed park, which should be conceded to the National Guard, the public will find in the brilliant military displays afforded by the field drills, parades, and manœuvres on a large scale, new features of interest and attraction. From the elevated points overlooking the level tracts, the various evolutions and movements of from five to fifteen thousand men can be witnessed by at least two hundred thousand spectators, and it is needless to say that when the whole force of the city, with probably additions from other divisions, would unite in a grand

review—infantry, cavalry, and artillery—the lines of railroads would be crowded with men, women, and children, all eager to be present at these brilliant spectacles.

LANDMARKS AND TRADITIONS OF 1776.

It may not be out of place here to state that this particular part of the Twenty-fourth Ward, forming as it did before the act of annexation was passed, a portion of Westchester County, played a prominent part in the war of the Revolution, and the manorial residence of the Van Cortlandts, a substantial old mansion, erected, as shown by the quaint stone numerals engraved on its front, in the year 1748, was for a brief space occupied by General Washington, who from this point kept himself informed by actual observation and report of the whereabouts of the British forces. In 1783 he revisited the place and, with his staff, occupied the dwelling for the three days immediately preceding the evacuation of New York by the English. The bread, of which this distinguished guest partook was made of the flour ground in the old mill represented in one of the views of Van Cortlandt Park and, during the War of Independence, the same old mill served both friends and foes of American liberty; both red coats and Continentals, as it changed owners in the varying fortunes of the contest, and still stands a most interesting memorial of that day. It would, of course, be most desirable to preserve, as has been done with the headquarters at Newburgh, so interesting and valuable a relic of "the time that tried men's souls." The extensive tract comprised in the Van Cortlandt estate was, in fact, debatable ground during the Revolutionary war; Kingsbridge, which lies about a mile to the south, constituting the "barrier" of the British lines. In accordance with an order of Congress, dated May 25, 1775, a post was established at this point for the

purpose of keeping open communication between New York and the country. Here the outposts of both armies had occasional encounters, and the records of more than one fierce struggle are found in the bullets, bayonets, fragments of muskets, and other relics which are occasionally turned up in the work of excavation.

When Washington decided, in the eventful July of 1781, to join Lafayette at Yorktown, he lighted his camp fires on the summit of Vault Hill, the better to deceive the enemy with regard to his movements. The vault which gives its name to this eminence, from which an excellent view is afforded of the surrounding country, was the burial place of this historic family, and along its slopes and down through the valley of the Mosholu, many a bloody skirmish took place between the outposts of the two armies. A sanguinary fight between a body of Stockbridge Indians, who were firm allies of the patriots, and a portion of the British force, has left its memento in the grave which encloses the remains of forty red men, and which is to-day known as "Indian Field."

But the Revolutionary reminiscences and traditions of the place are so numerous as to forbid more than a passing reference. Even that, however, is enough to show that this tract possesses, in addition to its singular suitability for a grand public park, parade ground and rifle range, an historical interest which in these days of centennial celebrations gives it a special value—a value that will increase as time rolls on and those grand old days recede further and further into the past. Indeed, it would seem especially appropriate, that on the very ground where so much was accomplished to gain our freedom, our citizen soldiery should find its school for the education and training necessary to maintain it. When the generation that clasped hands with the men who fought and fell on those fields, watered by "the red rain that made the harvest" of free-

dom "grow," have passed away ; when the remembrance of their deeds transmitted from father to son grows fainter with each remove ; when it is transferred from the memory of the patriot descendants and legatees to the vigilant guardianship of history and the loving custody of tradition, then those hallowed spots will have an interest for liberty-loving pilgrims from all parts of the world, surpassing extent of view, or beauty of outline. These are shrines where patriotism is taught, not by wordy harangues, but by stern example, and wherever possible they should be preserved ; for no matter how glorious the succeeding years of the Republic have been, and the future may be, the roots of her power and her glory can be found only in the battlefields of the Revolution.

Among the many pieces of land that were considered available for the use of our citizen soldiers, and that had been personally inspected by the Major-General and officers of the First Division of the National Guard, the tract described was regarded as the most suitable. No such ground could be had elsewhere, affording the same easy means of access, without entailing a heavy expense to the city, and though probably not quite so extensive as could be desired, yet for the reasons already given it was deemed, after a careful examination, to be the best that could be selected. Your Commission, unwilling, however, to rely solely on their own judgment in a matter of such importance, consulted those best qualified to judge, as will be seen by the following correspondence between

L. R. MARSH AND MAJOR-GENERAL SHALER.

Desiring to obtain the views and opinions of Major General Shaler, the Commander of the First Division, the following letter was addressed to that distinguished officer,

from whom the subjoined reply, confirming their own judgment in the matter, was received :

COMMISSION TO SELECT AND LOCATE SITES FOR PARKS, }
NEW YORK, June 25, 1883. }

Major-General SHALER :

DEAR SIR—You have been informed through the public press that, under an act of the last Legislature of this State, a Commission has been appointed by the Mayor and confirmed by the Board of Aldermen, “to select and locate lands for public parks in the Twenty-third and Twenty-fourth Wards of the City of New York, and in the vicinity thereof.”

In view of the remarkable progress and growth of our city and the inadequacy of its park area to the present and future demands of its rapidly increasing population, this action of the Legislature was dictated by a wise foresight and a true economy.

It will be generally conceded that within such area as may be selected by the Commission there should be a certain space set apart for the military evolutions of our citizen soldiers, and also for such rifle and musket practice as is deemed essential to secure the highest efficiency in the use of these weapons. The selection of the proper location for a purpose so necessary to the thorough education of our National Guard involves in a special degree considerations of convenience and rapidity of access to and from the various armories, ample room for parade and manœuvres, and a lengthened range for target practice.

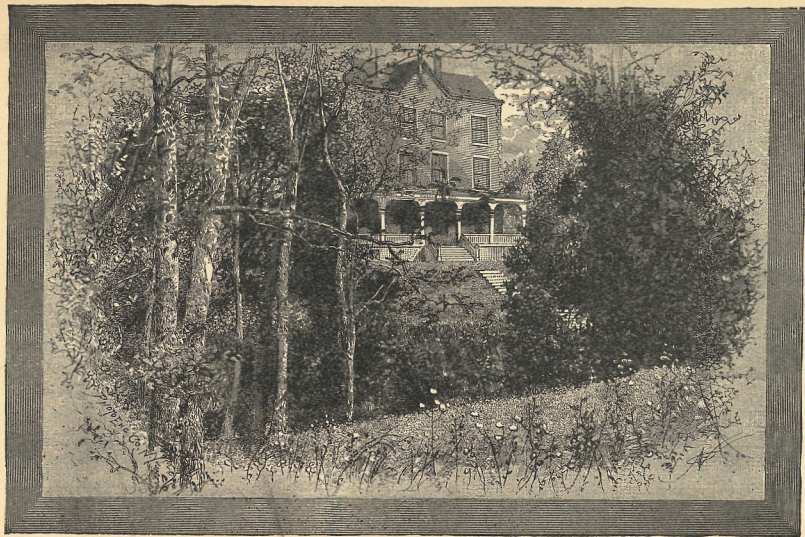
Knowing how much more practical the views and judgment of military men must be than those of a mere civil commission on such matters, and aware that you have already devoted much time and thought, as well as personal examination, to the selection of a suitable locality for the objects specified, we would be greatly aided and benefited by learning the result of your investigation on this important subject.

We would be much assisted by being placed in possession of your opinions as to the extent of the space required for the uses mentioned. The Commissioners would likewise be pleased to receive such suggestions as may seem to you pertinent to the inquiry which it has in hand.

With much respect,

LUTHER R. MARSH, *President.*

JOHN MULLALY, *Secretary.*



Bronx Park—The Lorillard Mansion.

HEADQUARTERS, FIRST DIVISION, N. G. S. N. Y., }
 NEW YORK, July 31, 1883. }

Hon. LUTHER R. MARSH,

President of Commission to Select and Locate Sites for Parks :

DEAR SIR—I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 25th ult., relative to the enlargement of the park area of the city, combined with the provision of a parade and drill ground and rifle range, and requesting my opinion on the suitability of a site, the extent or area required for the purpose, and “suggestions pertinent to the matter.”

In reply thereto I desire to say, that as to a site for the purpose, the best one suggested, of which I have any knowledge, is that at Van Cortlandt's, on the New York City and Northern Railroad, which location as to the space required for the purpose, while not giving ample room, could nevertheless be made very desirable. The actual present requirements are for the drilling of a body of 5,000 men, the present strength of the First Division, but, as in the laying out of additional park area the future growth of the city should be considered, so also should an increase of the Division to twice its present strength be provided for, say 10,000 of all arms. For the review of such a body in one line, a distance of 10,000 feet is required in the length of the ground, and about 1,000 in width ; the same body in two lines could be formed in one-half the space as to length, say 5,000 feet, but would require, at least, 300 feet more in width ; in three lines, length say 3,300 feet, and width 1,600 feet ; the latter form of ground, 3,300 x 1,600 feet, would be the best and most practicable for reviews, and would also be ample for drills and for manœuvres in mass. It is not probable that a clear open space of this size can be obtained within the city limits. The level ground, including the orchard lying west of the creek, at the south end of the Van Cortlandt property, before referred to, will only approximate that size.

The establishment of a rifle range 1,100 yards long on the east side of the park, and the connecting of the two sides by bridges, will make the south ends of that ground also available when required for manœuvring, and the two plots taken together, with a small outlay, can be made to answer the requirements of the National Guard of the city for many years to come. This ground has four important advantages over any other which I have visited : 1st. It has a large area of flat land requiring but little grading ; 2d. A rifle range of sufficient size can be established, having two of its sides and one end practically walled in by water ; 3d. It furnishes an admirable position for spectators on the tongue of high grounds which extends southward into the flat land west of the park ; 4th. It is

made accessible by a railroad running through it, which connects with the elevated system. This area will not necessarily be devoted exclusively to National Guard purposes, and if a public park is located upon these grounds, I would advise that all the land lying south of the point where the butts of the rifle range would be established, between the avenue on the west and the east boundary of the rifle range, which will include the high ground alluded to, be set apart for the use of the National Guard, and of clubs and associations formed for athletic games and physical culture, for pic-nic and pleasure-parties, and for such out-door amusements generally as are now prohibited in Central Park, to be used by the latter when not required by the National Guard. Contrary to a general impression which has prevailed, the occasional use of a grass field by the military and moderate use of it by pleasure-parties will have no appreciable injurious effect upon it.

It will give me pleasure to confer with your Commission or representatives of it any time upon this subject, it being one of great importance to the National Guard, and no less to the well-being of the whole community.

Very respectfully yours,

ALEXANDER SHALER,

Major-General.

The area which your Commission have indicated on the accompanying map for a park contains 1,070 acres, and is substantially the same as that marked out in the petition upon which your Honorable Bodies were pleased to enact the statute under which your Commission have been constituted, it being stated therein "that within the limits of New York there is no large tract of land suitable for a park which can be bought at low rates except the one designated (Van Cortlandt's), and that it is a tract of land of about one thousand two hundred acres."

THE BRONX PARK.

Among the various tracts to which the attention of your Commission was invited, and which they personally examined, was the land extending to a distance of from half to three-quarters of a mile on each side of the Bronx, and

from West Farms to Williamsbridge. This section comprises portions of the Lydig, Lorillard and Neale estates, and lesser portions of other property. Of this land your Commission has selected and surveyed for a park site six hundred and fifty-three acres. It would be difficult and probably impossible in the State of New York to find within an equal space a tract of such rare beauty, rivaling, if not in broad expanded views, certainly in picturesque loveliness, some of the most romantic scenes in the Adirondack region. Though less than a half hour's drive from the Harlem river, there are few in the City of New York who are aware of its peculiar fitness for a public park and its rare charms of scenery. That such a spot should exist in its original state, in its native wildness, so near the settled portion of the city, and yet almost so wholly unknown and unsuspected, may well awaken surprise.

The Bronx, which now forms the eastern boundary line of New York, runs through this territory from north to south, varying in width from fifty to four and five hundred feet, forming at intervals wide lake-like reaches, from which the banks rise to the height of fifty, eighty, and in some places ninety feet. Where its waters are interrupted by the Lydig Dam, over which they are precipitated in one broad, foaming cascade, that adds a new charm to the landscape, it reaches its greatest width and preserves the appearance of a broad lake for at least a mile. The banks on either side of the wider part of the river rise somewhat abruptly, in some places easily surmounted and at others of a precipitous character. Gigantic trees, centuries old, crown these summits, "a shrubbery that Shenstone might have envied" spreads around, while great moss and ivy-covered rocks project here and there at different heights above the surface of the river, increasing the wildness of the scene. Among these is a grand old tree that towers to the height of over one hundred and fifty feet, a veritable monarch of the forest,

standing apart in solitary magnificence, and known to the present and several past generations as De Lancey's Pine. It obtained its name from the De Lancey family, who owned the land which is now known as the Lydig estate, and on which was the house that, as stated in Bolton's "History of Westchester," once served as the headquarters of Washington. This building was subsequently destroyed by fire. De Lancey's Pine, however, remains, and would form not only a conspicuous and beautiful object in the Bronx Park, but an interesting historical relic, having as such a value above its mere pecuniary worth.

" Where gentle Bronx clear winding flows,
The shadowy banks between,
Where blossomed bell or wilding rose
Adorns the brightest green,

* * * * *

Stands high in solitary state
De Lancey's ancient pine. "

But Delancey's Ancient Pine, is not the only feature of special interest in the Bronx Park, for it possesses in a huge boulder (evidently deposited on its present resting place during the world's glacial period), an object of peculiar value and attraction. This great stone, weighing probably a hundred tons, is so balanced upon the rock on which it was originally deposited by the melting of some huge iceberg, from whose embrace it was, countless ages ago, released, that by an ordinary effort of human strength, it can be set rocking to and fro on its immovable base. Such an attraction could not probably be duplicated by the most skillful appliance of man's ingenuity. It is, as Moore says,

" Like that stone of the Druid race,
Which the gentlest touch at once sets moving."

Within the Lorillard estate the Bronx courses through a narrow rock-bound gorge, the walls of which tower to an altitude of nearly a hundred feet, the great trees on either

side throwing weird and fantastic shadows on the glancing waters below. Rocky knolls, green patches of meadow, thickly shaded sylvan retreats and wide stretches of lawn give a varied character to the land, rendering any effort of art wholly superfluous. On the Lorillard estate there are tracts in which the natural beauties of the locality have been aided by the skill of the landscape gardener, and here in the character of the soil and the work already done, an excellent opportunity is presented for the establishment of a botanical garden, without which the park system of our metropolis must be considered incomplete.

The walks and drives on either margin of the river, which here and there through the vista has the appearance of a lake, winding among the native growth of oak, chestnut, hickory, pine, beach and other indigenous trees, could not fail to render the Bronx Park one of the most frequented and popular resorts in the city. We feel convinced that if your Honorable Bodies could visit this beautiful tract of country, which nature has designed for a park, and which far surpasses in its natural wildness the artificial formations of the Central, there would not be a dissenting opinion as to its reservation for public use forever. The Department of Public Parks has done its part in the matter by locating a tract of about one hundred acres on one side of the Bronx, to which it is confined by the fact that the other bank of the river is in Westchester, and beyond the prescribed limits of the city, and, consequently, beyond present municipal jurisdiction. This nucleus of a larger park is in the same condition as the Van Cortlandt estate, so far as possession is regarded, having been withheld from improvement and cultivation, and may remain so for years to come, the land in the meantime augmenting in value with the approach of population. It is needless to emphasize the danger, the impolicy, the extravagance of delay, or to urge in the very teeth of past experience the unwisdom of further postpone-

ment on the ground that other needs are pressing—a work which in time pays ten hundred per cent. profit on the outlay. It is essential to secure a certain space on both sides of the Bronx, in order, as has been well said, “to put the possibilities of disagreeable neighborhood at a distance.”

SANITARY REASONS DEMAND THE PRESERVATION OF THE BRONX.

Convincing as are the arguments in favor of the dedication of this land for a public park, and which are based upon its singular adaptability, requiring comparatively slight expenditure to fit it for public use, there is another and possibly a more powerful reason, why it should be preserved as a people's pleasure ground. It is very evident that this section of the city is destined, ere many years, to be occupied by a large and rapidly increasing population. Present indications all point to this inevitable result. The Suburban Rapid Transit has at last, after patient waiting, and the removal of the many obstacles thrown in its path, by legal and other difficulties, succeeded in securing the right of way across the Harlem river at Second avenue, and has commenced the construction of the bridge, which is to unite at that point the two systems, making a continuous line from the Bronx to the Battery. Thus the completion of the long contemplated project of rapid transit between the city's northern and southern limits, on the east side, is destined to open up this heretofore neglected territory to the inflowing tide of population.

The land in this section, with the exception of a part already described, is admirably adapted for building purposes, and is certain to attract a very large proportion of the prospective settlers. It is not difficult to predict the consequences. Unless secured in time, the Bronx will be transformed from one of the most exquisite spots to a com-



St. Mary's Park—Northeast View.

mon receptable for the drainage of that section, and eventually, becoming a public nuisance, be condemned to the uses of a common sewer, which, as a safeguard to the public health, will have to be constructed along the bed of the once picturesque stream, which will have thus disappeared forever.

In the discussion of the subject of annexation a few years ago, it was proposed to draw a line from the Hudson river to the Sound, which would include Yonkers, Mount Vernon and New Rochelle. That such an extension of our city limits will eventually take place, there can be no doubt. It is only a question of time; and when accomplished, our enlarged park system can be extended into the new territory, and another addition made, which should include the upper waters of the Bronx, preserving it from contamination along that portion of its course also. The river might thus become the line of a magnificent parkway which, as in the case of the Wissahickon in Fairmount Park, could be made a valuable and beautiful addition to the general plan, forming a connecting link with another park, which should, and we have no doubt will be laid out north of the present boundary, completing and crowning the whole park system north of the Harlem river.

CROTONA PARK.

This tract of land lying between North Third avenue and Boston avenue, and East One Hundred and Seventieth and East One Hundred and Seventy-fifth streets, and heretofore known as Bathgate Woods, has been selected by your Commission and denominated Crotona Park. Situate on a ridge of land which forms the eastern crown of the watershed of Mill Brook Valley, it commands an extensive view of the surrounding country, and overlooks the valley below. It is admirably adapted for park purposes; its luxuriant

growth of forest trees affording ample shade even in a mid-summer noon. Oak, elm, and magnolia, lofty and wide spreading, their roots covered with carpeting moss and lichens, their interlacing branches looking like the growth of centuries, give an impression of solitude and isolation, totally at variance with the idea of proximity to a great commercial centre.

The ground is beautifully diversified with hill and dale, glade and glen. Beneath the trees, pic-nic parties enjoy themselves during the summer and autumn, the cooling breezes that are to be found there in the sultriest weather making the place especially suitable for social parties, while those who take enjoyment in a magnificent prospect, can, from some open height, in clear weather, sweep the horizon round from the Palisades to the piers of Brooklyn Bridge.

The location, geographically considered, is the centre of the upper half of New York City, more so, even, than Central Park, is of the island portion of the Metropolis. Means of access for the entire population of the city are already furnished by the Harlem Railroad, the Elevated Railroads, the horse cars and the Suburban Rapid Transit Company, which has projected routes along the eastern and western boundaries of the proposed Crotona Park. On a portion of this property the Board of Education has erected a grammar school, one of the finest sites for an educational institution within the city limits. As the lines of travel are already established on both sides of this property its dedication to purposes of public recreation would not offer any impediment to the growth of the city.

Thus it is apparent that this tract possesses the first indispensable requisites for a park—beauty and variety of surface coupled with luxuriance and variety of vegetation. In point of position it has the advantages of being near the city and easily accessible while retaining its rural character.

The extent of Crotona Park is $135 \frac{36}{100}$ acres. Of this area a space sufficient for a zoological garden, and well adapted to the purpose, with an abundant supply of water, can be set apart when the land shall have been acquired by the city.

ST. MARY'S PARK.

The attention of your Commission has been specially directed to the subject of local parks of smaller area than those already described, and which, from their dimensions, they regard as not only suburban, but, like the Central, metropolitan in their character. After due consideration of the needs of localities within the Twenty-third and Twenty-fourth Wards, they have selected three sites, of different areas, which they deem particularly adapted for local parks. The popular judgment has, we may say, already marked out one of these as a public pleasure ground, and given it the name of St. Mary's Park. In fact, the people of this part of the city have used it as a place of recreation for many years, and its green fields and shady nooks are the almost constant resort of picnic, excursion, and other pleasure parties. Its suitability for park purposes was recognized and fully appreciated by the old town of Morrisania, and long prior to the act of annexation, they had proposed to set it apart for the recreation of the people. St. Mary's Park was formerly a portion of the estate of Gouverneur Morris, who played a prominent part in the Convention which framed the Constitution of the United States, and who was also a delegate to the Convention which gave its present Constitution to our own Empire State, and subsequently occupied the positions of United States Senator and Minister to France. Within a few hundred feet of the park stands the picturesque edifice known as St. Anne's Church, in the cemetery of which rest the remains of this true patriot and eminent statesman.

Constituting a marked feature in the surrounding territory, above which it rises in places to an elevation of over one hundred feet, this natural park requires but little change to adapt it for public occupation. From its highest points extended views of the East river and Sound, the Harlem and Hudson rivers, are presented, while the park itself possesses a variety of scenery which is only to be found in larger areas elsewhere. It is in fact a park in miniature, covering an area of about twenty acres, with woods, hills, valleys, rocks, beautiful stretches of meadow land, and a small lake fed by natural springs. While its topographical advantages are such that it requires little expense for improvement, its irregular surface, forming its greatest recommendation for the use stated, renders it unsuitable for building purposes and the construction of thoroughfares. To grade this beautiful upland to a level with the city streets, and destroy its commanding view, would be a heartless desecration! In a word, nature seems to have specially designed it for a park, and, in the opinion of your Commission, its appropriation for any other purpose would be a serious mistake, costing more in the end than the amount expended in securing possession. The area of St. Mary's Park in twenty-five and one-third acres.

CLAREMONT PARK.

This tract of land contains thirty-eight acres, or about thirteen acres more than St. Mary's. Like that natural park it presents from its elevated grounds, which in some places rise to a height of one hundred feet, extended views of the surrounding territory; while its well-wooded tracts and level spaces, varied with many quiet little dells and shady nooks, commend it especially for the purposes designed by your Commission. It has one advantage which distinguishes all the sites selected and recommended in

this report—it is a park already and would require comparatively trifling outlay to put it in a better condition for public use. It is even now, however, ready for occupation and might be thrown open to visitors the moment the land is purchased. Made up of two ridges and an interlying valley it possesses a desirable variety of surface undulations, eminences, depressions, and stretches of level land. Part of it is at present used for farm purposes and grass is cut and crops raised on it. A regular country road runs through it, as unlike a thoroughfare in proximity to New York as could be imagined. In fact the idea of remoteness is suggested at every turn, resembling in this particular other localities described and recommended in this report. The vegetation is luxuriant, vines and mosses beautify and half conceal the rocks and stones that crop out on the hillside, or huddle together here and there in picturesque confusion by the unfashioned roadway. Claremont Park is about three quarters of a mile from Highbridge and is reached by the Harlem and New Haven Railroad.

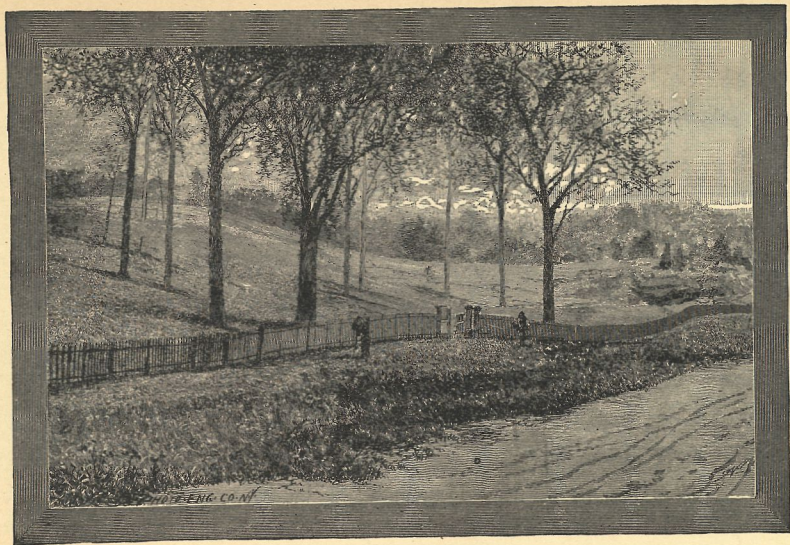
PELHAM BAY PARK.

The petition upon which the act, chapter 253 of 1883, under which your Commission were appointed was passed, stated “that in addition to such breathing spaces as Central Park and the park mapped out in the bill referred to [Vap Cortlandt Park], *New York wants and should have immediately, a grand park with a water front on Long Island Sound*; one which should be the people’s own, a resort for picnics and excursions, a place where they could enjoy the pleasures of boating, bathing, fishing, riding, etc.” It was furthermore urged “that as no such territory is now included within the boundaries of the city, the question of securing a suitable site for such a park is not so simple and easily resolvable as that already considered;” and prayed

that a Commission might be created "to more fully and authoritatively inquire into the matter," and report to the Legislature "what steps should be taken to secure this desideratum." Your Commission, therefore, felt that such inquiry was a portion of the duty imposed upon them by your Honorable Bodies, and have had great reason to be gratified by the favorable results of their investigation.

A large park on Long Island Sound, well situated and picturesque, accessible both by land and water, swept by the healthful breezes of each, a park which may be approached by steamboats and all manner of vessels, as well as by land carriage; where the people can roam in freedom; well shaded by native trees, seems so necessary to our city as it is to be, and at the same time so beautiful, original and healthful, and, as we judge, not beyond the limits of the authority you have conferred upon us, that the members of your Commission were impelled to examine the coast-line for an appropriate location. They have, therefore, personally inspected that line and its indentations for the most suitable ground for such a park, believing that this growing metropolis ere very many years, will embrace four and even five millions of inhabitants, and the citizens of the State who take a pride and an interest in the city's prosperity will not much longer be content that its eastern boundary shall be defined by the slender rivulet of the Bronx; but will insist rather that her territory shall embrace all the land below her northern line, lying between the Hudson and Long Island Sound—a domain that seems marked by nature for the site of a city, which we hope, and firmly believe, is to be one of the grandest cities of the world.

The improvements now in progress, the opening through the Harlem river, by the Federal Government, of a great commercial channel between the East and the North rivers, which will send thither the centre of our business city, the stupendous works of the National Government for the



St. Mary's Park—Southeast View.

removal of obstructions in the great channel connecting the sound with the ocean ; the railroad facilities which the last few years have developed and those contemplated in the immediate future ; the improvement of the streams which lead into the Sound ; and the push of population and business in that direction, cannot but have the effect of making the land bordering on the East river too indispensable for domestic, commercial and manufacturing purposes to permit the abstraction of the requisite number of acres required for the park, and to interdict the location of such pleasure grounds along the shore below Throgg's Neck.

Around Port Morris, and below, and above that point up to Throgg's Neck, it is evident that the shore is foredoomed to material and practical business uses, and that any park situated there would soon be environed with the smoke of furnaces and forges, and the noise of the trip-hammer. Above Throgg's Neck the shore is so highly cultivated, and studded with country seats, as to be too costly to be taken with advantage for recreation ground. Following the shore line still further we failed to discover any land specially appropriate (except such as would, from its high state of cultivation and improvement, be too expensive), until we reach the peninsula of Pelham Neck and its vicinity, where a natural park is spread out, of diversified grounds, rolling, healthful, well-wooded, almost sea-surrounded and of generous amplitude.

This great park of seventeen hundred acres, with its coastal indentations, including its picturesque bays and inlets, its open water front on the Sound and the wooded margin of Hunter's Island, has an aggregate shore line of nine miles and embraces a territory which your Commission can truly say is unsurpassed for purposes of public recreation by any park in the world. A section of the land having an extent of over four hundred acres stretches out

in the form of a peninsula into the Sound, presenting numberless pictures of great diversity and beauty. This noble expanse of water, which constitutes the highway for a large portion of the coast commerce between New York and the Eastern States, forms a splendid moving panorama, while along the shore line of the park are large tracts of woodland, abounding in stately trees, wide-spreading oaks and graceful elms, centuries old and forming natural groves.

Surrounding this peninsula, and of easy access, are several islands, some of which are connected by bridges and causeways with the mainland, and all of which can be readily approached by steamboats and sailing craft.

The ocean tides which make their way through the East river in one direction, and in an opposite course through the Sound, meet a little below Throgg's Neck, nearly opposite Whitestone—and result in a collision of waters forming a tide-rip there. The upgoing tide carries with it the odious bilge water and much contamination, as it passes the wharves and sewers of New York and Brooklyn, until it is arrested by the descending tide from the Sound; at which place of conjunction the tide-rip prevents the flow of any impurities eastward, and protects the narrow channel at Throgg's Neck, so that the waters above that part and those which bathe the shores of Pelham Neck are sparkling and pure. This consideration is certainly of great importance in selecting a site for a park where the waters bordering it, and forming, so to speak, a marine extension of it, and over which much of the approach is to be made in all kinds of crafts, are to constitute so prominent a feature, and one of its greatest charms. The bathing and fishing facilities attached to this park would form one of its chief attractions, but the healthful enjoyment derived therefrom would of course depend mainly upon the purity of the water.

Fortunately this extended water-front has hitherto escaped so-called improvements, as if reserved by some

good providence for the benign purpose to which we trust it will be devoted. The land at Pelham Neck can, we are informed, be obtained at a moderate price and it will require but little expense in preparing it for visitors. It would, with the exception of some necessary roads and walks,—for it has already been fenced to our hand by water—be better let alone. Nature has already done all that is required, and the people will enjoy themselves with greater zest if permitted to stroll unrestrained over its greensward and through its woods, instead of being confined to prim and narrow paths, and confronted on every side by prohibitory notices and threatened with the infliction of pains and penalties. We would report in favor of parks where the people can be free in all reasonable occupation and enjoyment.

If it should appear at first sight too far away from the present densely-populated portion of the city, the answer to the objection is conclusive. It is certainly, with the present means of access, not more remote than Central Park when it was laid out over a quarter of a century ago, and it is several miles nearer than Starin's Glen Island. When the proprietor of that popular summer resort, who had a fleet of steamers constantly employed in conveying visitors, announced the termination of the season,—new as the enterprise was—he stated that the number of persons conveyed to and fro exceeded six hundred thousand, and that the enterprise had proved so profitable and successful he intended, among other features of interest, to establish a zoological garden for the amusement of his patrons. The inference is obvious—if Glen Island, which is some miles further than Pelham Neck, is not too distant for the hundreds of thousands of health and pleasure-seekers, the objection as to its distance is not worthy of a moment's consideration. There is a necessity upon the city to grow in that direction as well as

up the Hudson and in the central position, and the establishment of a park in the location described will draw around it the homes of the people. The facilities of access by land and water will be so great, and the place so easily reached and at such slight expense, that it will be a boon to the workers and the toilers of the great city to get into such an atmosphere, so fresh and uncontaminated.

This park will be a benefaction to the people, greater each year as the necessity for it becomes more and more apparent, and judging of the future by the past, and by the fast coming impulses of the present, it is fair to assume that in ten or fifteen years the advancing tide of settlement will have invaded the section actually bordering the site which is here recommended.

City Island, united to the easterly end of Pelham Neck by a bridge, is cut up into small holdings, and is, in the village part, quite thickly populated, having over 1,200 inhabitants, some 200 voters, and perhaps 250 dwellings. These citizens, unless by water, must necessarily traverse the length of Pelham Neck on their way to and from their island home. Before the Revolution this island was divided into city lots of 25 by 100 feet, and some of the lots were sold at fifty pounds apiece.

It is believed that this proposed park on the coast would be cheaper in the purchase, and require less expenditure to put in condition and maintain, than any other tract of equal size within our range, and would outrank any park of any city in the world in the beauty of its position, in usefulness, in the variety and magnificence of its views, and the originality of its design.

It will be seen that the proposed Pelham Bay and Bronx parks are directly connected by the Eastern Boulevard and Pelham and Fordham avenues, which latter between the parks, we propose to widen to four times the present width, and call it "The Bronx and Pelham Park-

way." As the boulevard is already public property, the cost of the additional land required for such widening—about ninety-one acres—would not be heavy. Such an union of the entire park system of upper New York would seem to be most desirable ; especially as it may be accomplished so easily and cheaply through the public avenue already established.

THE PARKWAYS.

In the location and appropriation of certain tracts of land for parkways, your Commission have considered these as essential parts of the whole system. Referring to the suggestions of the petition, upon which chapter 253 of the Laws of 1883 was passed, they find that they are authorized "to take into consideration the advisability of constructing parkways between the proposed parks, and of utilizing some of the avenues and boulevards now existing for such purpose." In the performance of this duty they recommend two such grand avenues—one uniting the proposed Van Cortlandt and Bronx Parks, and entitled the Mosholu Parkway, and the other connecting the latter with Pelham Bay Park—which would not only unite these magnificent recreation grounds, but would give a continuous drive through the whole, and a smaller one uniting the Bronx and Crotona parks.

The Mosholu parkway, which contains an area of eighty acres, exclusive of roads, would be six hundred feet wide and nearly a mile long. In the park system of Chicago, the Midway Plaisance, which unites the Jackson, Washington and Gage parks, embraces ninety acres, is about the same length, and nearly two hundred feet wider, forming an important and beautiful feature of the whole plan, as will be seen by reference to the description in this report of the public pleasure-grounds of the great Lake City. The "Coney Island Con-

course," which is part of the Brooklyn park system, is one thousand feet wide and over half a mile long. It is almost needless to say that such a feature would not only greatly increase the beauty of the general design, but throughout its whole length would have the effect of largely enhancing the value of the property fronting thereon and materially augmenting the tax revenue derivable therefrom.

The Bronx and Pelham parkway, as shown on the map, has an area of ninety-one acres, exclusive of the present boulevard, which is taken in. Its width is four hundred feet, its length about two and a half miles, and it traverses a territory which, when annexed, as it eventually will be, will form a most valuable and attractive section of the metropolis. A smaller parkway is also recommended to unite the limited Crotona with the Bronx Park, which would thus give a continuity to the whole park system contemplated in this report, with the single exceptions of the small area of St. Mary's and the Claremont.

THE MAP AND VIEWS OF THE PROPOSED PARKS.

In order to present to the eye, at a glance, the location of the grounds herein recommended, their relative position to other parks and the populated centres, the line of advance of the city's population, the adaptability of the grounds for places of recreation and exercise, their shape and relative size, and the modes of access now existing and contemplated by land, and the unlimited approaches to Pelham Bay Park by water, your Commission have caused a map to be prepared by their engineer, General James C. Lane, who has given much personal inspection and study to the subject. The experience of General Lane as a civil engineer and landscape architect, and his artistic taste in all matters pertaining to landscape gardening, will commend his map and report, we doubt not, to your favorable consid-



St. Mary's Park—Northwest View.

eration. A diminished copy of the map is prefixed to our report.

As your Honorable Bodies cannot visit the grounds in person, and as, in winter, a committee cannot judge of them to advantage, we have had a variety of limited views taken from the different parks proposed, and copies interspersed through our report, which will show how nature has already taken on herself the business of creating these parks, and saved us much of the expense and labor; and will give intimation of the picturesque and lovely scenes which would be opened to the public use and enjoyment, should our recommendation be adopted.

The sites selected are so dissimilar in character that each seems to have a distinct individuality. Each has natural advantages and special beauties not to be found in the others; each has attractions that will appeal forcibly to different tastes, and peculiarities of configuration and position that will render it suitable for different purposes. This marked diversity we consider an argument in favor of each, for nothing would so dwarf the public taste as a succession of parks as much alike as a row of brown-stone fronts.

In the sites selected by your Commission nature has been so overmastering in her action that no amount of intrusive cultivation can efface their natural traits, and no artificial forcing can turn them into duplicates. Each stands on its own merits, a complement of all, blending in concordant beauty, but standing apart in harmonious contrast. The illustrations prove it.

Van Cortlandt Park, with its wide stretches of undulating country, its circling hills, its extensive prospects, its limpid lake, margined by grassy slopes, its ever-flowing brook, its historic sites, its patriotic associations, its level tract, whereon our citizen soldiery could be exercised in all the manœuvres and details of mimic warfare—contrasts

strikingly with the romantic beauty and secluded loveliness of the Bronx Park, where the picturesque stream, which gives a name as well as a charm to the region, flows through rocky glens darkened with the green gloom of overhanging trees, or widens out into pools where the disciples of Izaak Walton might wile hours away ; or winds its way through sunny meadows and scenes of unsurpassed sylvan loveliness.

Not less striking is the contrast between both these tracts and the park by the Sound. Indeed, Pelham Bay Park stands altogether alone, being necessarily unlike any of its inland compeers. Unique in its position, form, attractions and possibilities, a noble expanse of water almost encircling it, a clear, unobstructed view of the heavens overhead, the glory of space on every side, it seizes on the imagination and satisfies the poetic and artistic instinct. In addition, it has the material advantages of affording opportunities for aquatic sports and natatorial exercises, for fishing and boating, for regattas and water excursions.

Altogether different is Crotona Park, seated on the crest of a hill and overlooking the busy, thriving, populous valley below. To the west, it commands a view of High Bridge and the distant Palisades of the Hudson, while southward, on a clear day, the massive piers of the Brooklyn Bridge can be seen against the background of the sky. Richly wooded and beautifully diversified, musical with running brooks, it is already a park ripe for occupancy. Its elevated position, which secures for it refreshing breezes, even in the heart of summer, adds to its desirability for park purposes ; while St. Mary's and Claremont—fit for occupation the day they are declared and without further expense—lift high their undulating plateaus, to survey the homes and industries of the people.

AMERICAN PARKS.

PUBLIC PLEASURE GROUNDS OF CHICAGO.

Your Commission, in directing the attention of your Honorable Bodies to the limited park area of New York, so wholly inadequate to its present wants, and so greatly disproportioned to its future needs, desire to invite your special consideration in this connection to the generous provision that has been made by many of the principal cities of the Union, which, though inferior in population, are greatly in advance of our metropolis in this respect. Taking London and Paris as their examples, they have exhibited an earnestness and energy in the good work that has already placed them far in advance of New York, although it is less than ten years since some of them entered the field of competition.

This is particularly true of Chicago, Boston, St. Louis, San Francisco, and Buffalo. While Philadelphia has its Fairmount, the largest park in the United States, it is surpassed in the aggregate extent of its public grounds, as compared with its population, by several other cities. And first among these is the City of Chicago, the metropolis of the West, the Lake City, par excellence, with its wide spreading parks, looking out over the vast inland sea, whose inlets and lagoons are skilfully embraced in the general park plan, and made to contribute largely to the beauty of the whole design.

While the level prairie land on which Chicago has been built is unfavorable to that diversity of surface which gives picturesque effect to the view, the resources of art have been successfully employed in the work of construction and em-

bellishment. The improvements have been made on the most liberal scale, and although, according to the last report of the officials in charge of the work, some years must elapse before its completion, sufficient has been done to justify the belief that the parks will when finished fully realize the highest expectations of the people.

The total number of acres embraced in the park system of Chicago is 3,000, divided as follows :

Acres.		Acres.	
Jackson Park.....	586	Humboldt Park.....	200
Washington Park.....	371	Garfield ".....	185
Gage Park.....	20	Douglass ".....	180
Midway Plaisance.....	90	South ".....	372
Lincoln Park.....	250	Lake Shore ".....	593
		<hr/>	
		Total.....	<u>2,847</u>

Besides these there are eleven smaller parks, which increase the area to at least three thousand acres, and these are connected by a system of boulevards conceived on a grand scale, and which are now being rapidly pushed to completion. These splendid avenues have a width varying from one hundred to two hundred and fifty feet, ornamented with long lines of stately and vigorous trees. The length of these magnificent boulevards will over thirty miles, and one-half of that distance is reserved for use.

The South Park, which consists of Jackson, Washington and Gage, and a superb parkway, entitled Midway Plaisance, has an extent of one thousand and fifty-five acres. Artistic taste of the highest order has been employed in the laying out and arrangement of the land and water surface, for which Lake Michigan has been placed under contribution. Lagoons and havens and meres spread through the broad expanse of land, ramifying here and there in miniature bay-like indentations; in other

parts narrowing and widening like rivers, whose banks are wooded to the water's edge. The undulating surface of Lake Michigan seen through the green vistas of leafy groves, with which the parks are liberally supplied, adds a feature of enchantment to the landscape which gains immeasurably by force of contrast with the great broad meadows denominated "opens," that stretch away inland. A peculiarly beautiful feature in the plan of the South Parks is the Midway Plaisance already mentioned. It contains, as stated, ninety acres, is nearly a mile long, and between seven and eight hundred feet wide. Through its centre is constructed a series of ornamental basins extending its entire length, margined by trees and shrubs, and bordered by pleasant shaded walks. The basins, which are a series of miniature lakes, vary in width from twenty to over a hundred feet, and receive their supply of water from Lake Michigan, through the Lagoon of Jackson Park, which is connected by the Plaisance with Washington Park.

Much has been done, but still more remains to be effected before the parks of the Lake City are finished; but enough has been accomplished to prove the earnest interest which the people take in the subject.

THE PUBLIC GROUNDS OF WASHINGTON.

It might be reasonably supposed that of all the cities in the United States, the National Capitol, which has been appropriately called "the City of Magnificent Distances," could most easily dispense with large breathing places. With its broad avenues varying in width from one hundred and twenty to one hundred and sixty feet, and with its streets having an aggregate length of two hundred and seventy-nine miles, it would seem as if other "lungs" were wholly superfluous. Yet with the wealth of space it possesses in its tree-bordered thoroughfares, resembling park-

ways, it has a park surface of about one thousand acres, including the Soldiers' Home and other grounds, and its great avenues and open spaces have an area of 2,554 acres, which is little less than one-half the extent of the city.

The City of Washington was designed on a scale of magnificence surpassing that of any other capital in the world, and its "Reservations," or public grounds, though of less area than those of several other cities in the United States, are specially deserving of notice for the taste and skill displayed in their plan and embellishment.

"The Grounds," as the park spaces surrounding the Capitol and Presidential Mansion, are called, have a total area of about one hundred and thirty-two acres, of which eighty-one acres belong to the latter and fifty-one to the former. The space is divided into walks, parterres and lawns, the character of the surface being best adapted to this method of treatment. For their effect they are largely dependent on their artistic embellishments, fountains, statuary, etc., besides the grand public buildings erected within their limits. The Botanical Garden, and the grounds and buildings, under the charge of the Department of Agriculture, are, however, justly regarded as the most interesting and attractive to the general public, and particularly to the visitors at the Nation's Capital.

The Botanical Garden, with its conservatories, contains ten acres, the principal feature in the plan being the arrangement of the numerous flower beds, which are bright with a wealth of color, and redolent of delicious perfume during the spring and summer. In the conservatory are to be found the plants of every climate, "the palm tree of Scripture," "the tree fern from New Zealand," "the screw pine of Australia, with its cork-screw leaves and roots in mid air," "the dumb cane of South America," the sap of whose root, we are told, "takes away the power of speech;" "the Caffre bread tree from the Cape of Good Hope,"



St. Mary's Park—East View.

“the candle nut tree from the Society Islands,” “the four century plant,” “the papay, which has the property of rendering the toughest meat tender,” “the monkey bread plant, which grows on the banks of the Senegal, reaches the enormous circumference of one hundred feet, and is supposed to attain the age of five thousand years;” the eucalyptus trees which drinks up miasm and purifies the air; besides a long catalogue of other marvelous productions of the floral and vegetable world.

The Department of Agriculture, not so much for the extent of its grounds, as for the almost endless variety it presents, is one of the most attractive institutions of the City of Washington. In the proper sense of the term the land which has been appropriated for its special use cannot be called a park; and in fact the title as applied to nearly all the public grounds of the National Capital is a misnomer. They are either gardens or lawns, subserving the use of parks, adorned in many instances with statuary, vases, fountains, etc., or relying almost wholly for their interest on the public buildings erected in their midst. The Garden of the Department is a vast collection of flowering plants, without a tree to break their classified order and arrangement. The variety is almost bewildering, there being nearly two thousand different species. In addition to the Garden there are the Experimental Grounds for the cultivation and propagation of fruits, seeds and hardy plants, while for aquatic plants there are artificial lakes, rivers and swamps. The Arboretum is a practical school of botany, in which nearly all the trees of the world are catalogued and classified, and the Museum of Agriculture embraces in its vast and ordered array, specimens of all the productions of the vegetable kingdom.

As in the grounds of the Capitol, so those of the Smithsonian Institute, covering an extent of about fifty acres, are laid out in the form of lawns, groves, walks and drives,

while the Washington Monument Park, containing forty-five acres, the Soldiers' Home, five hundred acres, with its lakes and meadows, and drives of seven miles; the Zoological Garden, twenty acres; the Propagating Garden eight acres and its forcing houses and nursery, which supply the public grounds with trees and shrubs—all bear testimony to the liberal provision which has been made in the appropriation and dedication of large tracts of land to public use.

But the City of Washington is not wholly dependent on the "Reservation" or "Grounds," so called, for the recreation of its people. In the suburbs there are many beautiful drives and grounds open to the public, and within a distance of fifteen miles is Mount Vernon, the home and tomb of Washington, a priceless legacy. Here is the garden designed by Washington himself, and in it are several trees planted by his own hands. Out of respect to the memory of the Father of his country, the grounds have been left in almost the same condition in which they were when the Nation stood mourning by his grave.

The total area of the grounds, squares, places and reservations open to the people of Washington and visitors may be estimated at about one thousand acres, and as the population of the National Capital is something over 150,000, there is about one acre to every 150 inhabitants.

THE PARKS OF BOSTON.

In the history of the park movement in the United States, the city of Boston is entitled to and should receive special mention. With a true appreciation of the effect of large open spaces on the public health in the first place, and of profitable results to the public treasury in the second, as an important factor in the enhancement of real estate values, the municipal authorities of Boston have,

within the past four years, increased their park area from three hundred and fifty-five acres to a total of two thousand three hundred. From 1879 to 1883 they have added nineteen hundred and forty-five acres, of which they have already secured, by actual purchase, seven hundred and thirty-nine, leaving a balance of twelve hundred and six for which the necessary proceedings to obtain title are yet to be taken. The following list gives the names and area of the several tracts, in acres :

	Acres.
Common and public gardens.	72 $\frac{1}{2}$
Small squares and parks.....	60 $\frac{3}{4}$
Chestnut Hill, Parker Hill, and Eagle Hill Reservoirs	222 $\frac{1}{4}$
West Roxbury.....	561
Bussy Park and Arnold Arboretum....	567
Brighton Park.....	160
Jamaica Park.....	122
Muddy River Improvement.....	110
Back Bay Park.....	106
Wood Island Park.....	80
City Point Park.....	50
Charles River Embankment	60
Connecting parkways.....	70
South Bay Park.....	35
Savin Hill Park.....	13
Total.....	<hr/> 2,289 $\frac{1}{2}$ <hr/>

As the population of Boston, at the date of the last census, was 362,839, or one acre to every 121 residents, its park area compared to New York was thirteen to one, and it largely exceeded even that of Philadelphia, Chicago, St. Louis, and San Francisco, in fact of every park city in the Union. Impelled by the laudable desire to place their

city in the front rank of the great movement now going on in favor of more parks, the authorities of Boston have not only made the most liberal appropriation of lands for public use, but they have resolved that nothing shall be wanting in their general design for lack of the necessary means. Realizing, however, the true uses and purposes of parks, the officials under whose control they have been placed, do not believe in elaborate improvements involving great expense. They favor the protection of the sylvan features of large parks and the exclusion of all costly artificial ornamentation. "Simplicity of treatment only can," in their opinion, "harmonize with the natural beauties of the grounds, while any unnecessary architectural or engineering display will be both a waste and disfigurement."

Whatever difference of opinion there may be on this question, there can be none that such should be the treatment of suburban parks, which should be regarded as everyday playgrounds, where the people and their children, social parties, trade societies, benevolent associations, athletic clubs, Sunday and other schools, can enjoy themselves in healthful recreation, and where they are sure of protection against violence and ruffianism.

"The love of rural scenery," say the Boston Park Commissioners, in one of their early reports advocating more parks, "is universal, and the opportunity only is wanting to prove how thankfully the people will walk mile after mile from their city homes, if only they can find fields and woods where they are free to enjoy their holiday time. The cultivation of the old-fashioned and healthful habit of walking will not be the least of the blessings to follow from the laying out of these suburban works." And, as the result has proved, the people of Boston concurred in that opinion, for in the few years that have elapsed since it was expressed, they added, as we have shown, nearly two thousand acres to the park area of 1879.

But while the Boston Commissioners are desirous of avoiding all unnecessary expense, they do not underestimate the value of flowers, plants, etc.

A SCHOOL OF ARBORICULTURE THE NEED OF THE TIMES.

They have therefore added a new feature to their park system, called the "Arboretum," which is commended to the people as "a museum of living plants in which every tree and shrub capable of withstanding the climate of Massachusetts is to find its appropriate place," "as a school of forestry and arboriculture," and as "a scientific station for investigation into the relations of forests to climate and the flow of rivers, and into the best methods of forest reproduction and management."

An institution of this kind, if conducted with earnestness and scientific ability, must prove a most valuable adjunct not only to the park system of Boston but of other cities as well, and particularly of New York.

The public interest which has of late been manifested in the subject of forestry in this State in consequence of the rapid destruction of the woods of the Adirondacks, will ere long take such shape and direction as shall secure the legislation so much needed for the preservation not alone of the forests of that picturesque resort of hundreds of thousands of visitors, but of the noble Hudson, the navigation of which is already seriously threatened from the same cause. We also require an arboretum which shall teach our people what is necessary for the protection of our greatest water course. And as through it the Erie Canal connects us with the western lakes, the commercial supremacy of our metropolis and all its dependent interests as well, it is impossible to overestimate the importance of this question. Every such aid, therefore, as the arboretum, should be enlisted in a movement so vital to the material interests of our metropolis.

The park question is in fact intimately connected with that of silviculture, a topic which has for some years interested the civilized world. In discussing, therefore, the necessity for more public parks, your Commission deemed a special reference to this subject neither inappropriate nor inopportune. The planting and cultivation of trees is an essential feature of park management, and these we are told by a high scientific French authority (M. Becquerel), "tame the infected air and deprive it of its miasmas." We are also informed that "when a current of bad air laden with pestilential miasma penetrates a forest of a certain extent it is wholly deprived of these properties."

The public should be educated to a sense of the important part performed by trees in the economy of nature, and especially as to their effect in maintaining the fluvial supply of rivers, streams and canals, a matter which, as shown in the able and comprehensive reports of Mr. Verplanck Colvin, the Superintendent of the Adirondack Survey, seriously affects the navigation of the Hudson and the commercial interests of our metropolis.

"The influence of trees," says the Memorial of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, "in connection with the questions of water supply for cities and the maintenance of hydraulic power and of navigation in rivers and canals where these may be affected by drought, deserves serious attention."

The Executive Committee of the Chamber of Commerce of the City of New York, in a similar memorial, observes that, "in consequence of the destruction of a considerable portion of the forests which once formed the watershed of the Hudson, many of the small streams which once flowed continuously throughout the year are now dry during several months, and the effect of the diminution of the water upon the Hudson is already so great that naviga-



Crotona Park,—North View.

tion above Troy is rendered almost impossible in dry seasons."

The Governor of our State, in his recent message, in which he dwells with timely emphasis on this vital subject, says :

The immense volume of commerce which passes through the Erie Canal and the Hudson river to the seaboard, and the low stage of water during the summer in the last-named waterway, as well as the other rivers and streams of the State, have attracted the attention of the public to the necessity of arresting the further destruction of our northern forests.

This is certainly a very important matter, and should receive early and serious attention. We find ourselves facing the danger which now so excites the people, because the interests of the State have not been cared for in the years that are past, and because our forest-laden lands have been recklessly disposed of at nominal prices, until, at this late day, we are awakened to the fact that the control which the State should have always maintained over that part of those lands which are important to the preservation of our streams has been to a large extent surrendered.

The President of the United States has made the subject a matter of special reference in his recent message to Congress, and recommends as of "the highest consequence," "the preservation of such portions of the forests of the national domain as essentially contribute to the equable flow of important water courses."

THE PARKS OF ST. LOUIS.

With a population of 350,522, St. Louis has a park area of 2,232 acres and ranks next to Boston on the list of American cities distinguished for their interest in this movement. While they have made ample provision in the acreage which they have set apart for pleasure grounds, they have however, practised a rigid economy in their management and are evidently satisfied to leave to the future, works of embellishment that would necessitate a large outlay. There are nineteen parks in St. Louis, the

largest of which, Forest Park, contains 1,372 acres. The following list gives the dimensions of the larger ones, the others consisting of a number of small squares and places varying in area from one to twelve acres.

	Acres.
Forest Park	1,372
Carondelet.....	180
O'Fallon.....	158
Tower Grove.....	267
Lafayette.....	30
The Fair Grounds.....	83
Missouri Botanical Gardens.....	50

For the cultivation of fish and plants—two somewhat incongruous industries, it must be admitted—yearly appropriations are made. From the last annual report, we learn that ten thousand young carp were distributed from the hatchery at Forest Park, and that thirty thousand healthy young trees have been raised in the same park. As both the Van Cortlandt and Bronx Parks have a large water surface, and as the lake and river are well suited, one to the raising of trout and the other to the cultivation of black bass, both kinds being found in their waters, our Fish Commissioners would doubtless be permitted to turn them to good account by establishing hatcheries, which could be done at small expense. Thus, with a botanical garden, a well supplied menagerie, and a fish hatchery, we should take in nearly the whole field of animated nature, and our parks would possess a school of natural history with living illustrations, instead of dead specimens preserved in alcohol or stuffed with bran.

THE PARKS OF PHILADELPHIA.

While Chicago, St. Louis and Boston have each a larger park area in proportion to the population than Philadelphia, there is no city in the whole country which

can boast of a park of such magnificent dimensions. Indeed, Philadelphia's splendid pleasure-ground is only surpassed by the great parks of Paris and London, and, according to the testimony of competent witnesses, it is unsurpassed in its natural advantages. Covering an extent of two thousand six hundred and forty-eight acres, and endowed with the peculiar charm that belongs to diversity of surface and picturesque scenery it requires no artificial aid to enhance its beauty.

Nature, in fact, appears to have lavished upon this favored tract some of her rarest gifts: primeval forests, deep shady glens, huge masses of gray rock, 'clear sparkling fountains, rivulets pouring from the hill-sides to swell the waters of the broad Schuylkill and the wildly romantic Wissahickon, one of the loveliest of mountain streams. For miles and miles the visitor passes from one scene of enchantment to another—at times traversing great tracts of green meadow-land set in a frame-work of trees centuries old; at times wandering through the exquisite valley of the Wissahickon, glimpses of which only can be seen through the dense foliage in which it is partly embosomed; now passing through thickly wooded ravines, where the sunlight hardly penetrates the deep gloom, then emerging into the open country he finds himself among the scenes of the famous International Exposition of 1876, where many of the splendid structures then erected still remain as mementoes of that great event.

"Lying," says a recent report of Fairmount Park, "in what in a few years will be the very heart of the city, considered in reference to the uses for which it is intended and the situation it occupies, it may justly claim to be without a rival." One important object was attained by its creation, the prevention of the spread of manufacturing establishments along the margins of the Schuylkill and its tributaries, as in the appropriation of the land along the Bronx

we would save that stream from the pollution which would inevitably follow from the discharge of impurities into its waters. And to accomplish this result as well as to give the people of Philadelphia a park of which they may well feel proud, the Fairmount Park Commissioners paid for the land taken \$6,105,069, exclusive of the cost of improvements. "By Philadelphia having the park," say the Commissioners, "in contrast with Philadelphia without the park, we shall soon have a value added to our real estate and taxable resources *more than commensurate with the purchase money of all the park, and that value will increase indefinitely.* In this way the city will be more than a second time requited for her whole outlay. * * * Conceive of our approximate millions and coming millions as being without the Fairmount Park. Can any human imagination begin to estimate the sum of human health and happiness that would be lost to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, the world? Who could make the trial to run the parallel of the value of \$10,000,000 as the price of the park invested and running at interest for the city with the successive generations of her millions of people without the culture, and health, and happiness of the park and not feel humiliation, and, withal, being shocked at the meanness of the suggestion? Money is a sacred trust, indeed, for its potency for good; but life, health, happiness and gratitude to God are worth more than all hoarded wealth. We have and will keep this park; we will improve and love it; it shall be our pride and perpetual enjoyment; it shall be for us 'a thing of beauty and a joy forever.'"

This is enthusiasm, but it is excusable, nay more, commendable, for Fairmount Park has indeed been made "a joy" to many. Thus we are told that by the humane efforts and charitable contributions of philanthropic citizens many thousands of poor children have, during the heated terms of several successive years, been enabled to enjoy the



Crotona Park—Entrance—South View.

beauties of Fairmount. For the accommodation of visitors there are places of refreshment; for sight-seers, observatories; for children, swings, flying-horses, etc.; for the militia, spacious parade grounds; for athletic, base ball, croquet, and other clubs, ample play grounds; while the Schuylkill is the scene of many a boat race and regatta.

Of the buildings of the Centennial there remain Memorial Hall, Horticultural Hall, Machinery Hall, and the Main Building, besides some pavilions of foreign countries and of the various States. So popular has the Park become that as many as one hundred thousand persons have visited it on a summer's day, and thousands come from adjoining States to enjoy its scenery and health-giving air. In its Centennial buildings it has of course an attraction which no other park in the country possesses; but, if New York do not permit her opportunity to pass, she, too, may have, within the boundaries of one of the proposed parks, the grand structures of another and a greater exhibition to add to its attractions.

It is in the power of your Honorable Bodies to place this possibility within her reach, by making timely provision for the future. Every year's delay adds to the expense, and reduces the area of the land demanded by the necessities of the present, not to speak of the wants of the future. Surely this is something not merely to hope for, but to work for and to achieve. As we have shown, in our estimates of the financial results which have followed the creation of parks regarded as a speculation only, it is one of the most profitable in which the public money could be invested, giving more than tenfold returns on the outlay. And after all, is this not a minor consideration compared with its beneficial effects upon the people from a moral as well as a sanitary standpoint? If "a sound mind in a sound body" is the one thing desirable, then whatever

tends to secure that inestimable blessing for a people is surely well worthy the attention of their legislators.

In addition to Fairmount, there are several public parks, which swell the aggregate park area of Philadelphia to nearly three thousand acres. The principal of these are Hunting Park, forty acres; Washington Square, seven; Franklin Square, eight; Logan Square, eight; Independence Square, five; Rittenhouse Square, seven; and many others of less extent.

Before closing this reference to the parks of Philadelphia, it is but justice to refer to the Fairmount Park Association, a society of citizens of Philadelphia numbering over a thousand members, who have already done much for the adornment of the grounds and contributed many valuable works of art toward their embellishment.

In a notice of this great park, hardly less could be said, but having said so much, we desire to express our firm conviction that our new wards and the adjacent territory on the Sound possess capabilities for park uses that are not excelled—that are not equalled—even by the City of Brotherly Love. The views with which this report is illustrated afford indisputable evidence in support of that claim. In extent of territory embraced within the limits of a single park, Philadelphia may take the lead, but in the picturesque and romantic, New York, in the sites of her contemplated parks, can hold her own against so formidable a rival, while the proposed park on the Sound would stand without an equal.

THE PARKS OF BROOKLYN.

The evidence which your Commission have obtained from the history and administration of the parks of Brooklyn, sustain and confirm the experience of other cities in regard to the beneficial influences exercised by these great public improvements on the value of surrounding property. The

effect of the establishment of Brooklyn's great pleasure ground (Prospect Park), which deserves a place among the most beautiful parks of America and Europe, was only less striking than that produced by the creation of our own Central.

In the year preceding the commencement of the work of improvement that portion of the city extending from Atlantic avenue and sweeping around its southerly limits to the west, and now including some of the most eligible property, lay in a state of neglect, with no prospect of a change. Much of it was to be bought by the acre, its only use being for the purposes of agriculture, and when sold the price varied from \$50 to \$250 per lot. On the westerly border of Prospect Park the extended sloping ground commanding a view of New York Bay, Staten Island and New Jersey, the value of single lots ranged from \$250 to \$600. This property, we are informed by Mr. John Y. Cuyler, the Superintendent and Chief Engineer of the Brooklyn Park, to whose courtesy we are indebted for these facts, rapidly increased in value, and the real estate transactions of the period from 1866 to 1873 were very active, prices rising to a startling height. Many of the sales showed an advance of between *four and five hundred per cent.*, while as much as \$8,000 to \$10,000 were paid in exceptional cases for single lots. Real estate was depressed here as elsewhere by the financial revulsion of 1873, but the effect was transient, and to-day a much more extended area of property has, by reason of its contiguity to the park, long since recovered and reached a much higher value. "As a result," says Mr. Cuyler, "a careful investigation of the change of values and the higher rate of taxation disclosed by examination of the Assessors and Tax Office, it may be confidently asserted that the establishment of Prospect Park and the smaller parks has been generally beneficial as a financial venture on the part of the municipality, and

that as a matter of fact *impose no burden upon the taxpayer*, but have been and are an important factor in contributing to the city an increased revenue, which, were it separated and credited to a sinking fund, would at the present time, and in some instances entirely so, go a long way towards *paying off the indebtedness incurred by the issue of bonds for the original purchase of the lands and their improvement.*

Prospect Park may be said to rival the Central, and it certainly has a decided advantage over it in the commanding view afforded from its elevated points of the ocean, the Bay of New York, and the picturesque shores of Staten Island and New Jersey. Until our metropolis acquires the magnificent area recommended by your Commission, under the title of Pelham Bay Park, our sister city will continue to possess the superiority which she now enjoys.

The tract of land embraced within the limits of Brooklyn's great park has an extent of 515 acres, and with the adjoining Parade Ground an aggregate of 555. About fifty of these are laid out in the form of lakes, which are supplied by artesian wells. They constitute, with their miniature and picturesque islands, a most pleasing feature, and seen through the vista of embowering trees are singularly picturesque. The Long Meadow is a fine stretch of open sward, extending the whole length of one side of the park, with a thickly set and broad border of handsome shade trees. Ample space has been given to playgrounds for the children, and a picnic ground, while the Parade Ground not only accommodates the National Guard of Brooklyn, but through the courtesy of the authorities of that city, our own citizen soldiers, who have for years been dependent on our sister city, are allowed the privilege of using it on special occasions. With its six miles of broad and substantial drives, its four miles of equestrian road, and its twenty miles of walks, traversing the most attractive and



Crotona Park—The Grove.

pleasant portion of its grounds, Prospect Park is fully entitled to all that has been said in its praise.

But Prospect Park, like the Van Cortlandt, is not wholly dependent on its picturesque attractions for the high position it holds among public pleasure grounds. It has historic traditions which give it a special value in the eyes of the citizens of Brooklyn. The site of a redoubt which commanded a road called "The Battle Pass," is carefully preserved as a memento of the sanguinary combat that took place there between the Hessian mercenaries and the patriot forces under command of General Sullivan. The redoubt was constructed on the summit of a bluff overlooking the Flatbush and Old Port roads at their junction in the Valley Grove, and around the fortification, wherever the tide of battle ebbed and flowed, evidence of its fury has been found by the workmen employed on this part of the Park. Muskets, bayonets, sabres, balls, etc., were dug up in the progress of the work and placed in safe-keeping as valuable relics and mementos of the heroic past and of the part which Kings county played in the war for independence.

The next largest public ground, Washington Park, formerly called Fort Green, has an area of thirty acres, and is a favorite resort of the residents in its vicinity. Here, as in the case of Prospect Park, the most satisfactory financial results were obtained in the rise of real estate, and an increased revenue from enhanced values. Within this park is the vault to which were transferred, about ten years ago, the twelve thousand bodies of the "seamen, soldiers and citizens, who," in the language of the report of the Park Commissioners of Brooklyn, "fell victims to the cruelties of the British on board their prison ships during the American Revolution;" and over this vault a memorial is in process of construction which will form the chief object of attraction to every visitor.

The Parade Ground contains buildings for the use of the Second Division. It is also the most popular available resort for field sports for the youth of the city to be found anywhere in the county, and affords accommodations without charge for the use of colleges, schools, and amateur organizations for the games of base ball, cricket, lacrosse, foot ball, etc.

The following table shows the present park area of Brooklyn, which it is intended to increase by further additions in the near future :

	Acres.
Prospect Park.....	515
Parade Ground	40
Washington Park	30
Tompkins Park.....	$7\frac{3}{4}$
City Hall.....	$7\frac{1}{2}$
Carroll Park.....	2
City Hall Park	$1\frac{1}{2}$
Small enclosures.....	4
Ocean Parkway, $5\frac{1}{2}$ miles long and 270 feet wide.	180
Coney Island Concourse, 2,750 feet long by 1,000 feet wide.....	70
Eastern Parkway, $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles long and 270 feet wide	82
	<hr/>
	939 $\frac{3}{4}$

The Ocean Parkway, extending from Prospect Park to Coney Island, is connected with the Coney Island Concourse, which faces the ocean, and both of these splendid avenues form one of the grandest drives and promenades in the world.

An interesting and instructive fact connected with the administration of the Brooklyn parks is worthy of special mention. The total cost of lands for parks, parkways, etc., was \$4,000,000, and, as a means of defraying this expense, a surplus of one hundred acres was set apart to

be sold under an empowering act of the Legislature. Of this tract one hundred lots have been disposed of for \$500,000, and there remains still to be sold seven hundred more, which it is estimated will realize \$1,500,000, making in all \$2,000,000, or one-half the original cost of all the lands. This, it should be understood, is exclusive of the financial gain accruing to the city through the largely increased revenue obtained from the property surrounding the parks. If we compare the efforts which Brooklyn has made in providing recreation grounds for her people with the progress of New York in the same direction, it must be admitted that the advantage is largely in favor of the former.

THE PARKS OF BUFFALO.

The area of all the public lands in the City of Buffalo laid out in the form of parks and parkways is six hundred and twenty acres, and of these something more than one-half is embraced within the limits of the principal pleasure ground, which is known by the distinctive title of "*The Park*." It is connected by broad drives with a surrounding, open tract of at least thrice its extent, and adjoins the State Asylum Grounds of two hundred acres and Forest Lawn Cemetery of two hundred and thirty acres. So that there is in the whole combined area a grand open space of at least one thousand acres. Besides these there is "*The Front*," of fifty acres, which overlooks Lake Erie from a bluff sixty feet above its waters, commanding a fine prospect over the inland sea and pleasant views of Niagara river and the Canadian frontier. An adjacent tract of seventeen acres, called Fort Porter, is open to the public, forming a total area of nearly seventy acres, which is one of the most popular resorts during the summer months. The Parade for military use has an area of fifty acres and there are about forty acres in eight public squares or

places. The park approaches consisting of four parkways have a width of two hundred feet and a length of three miles, and these, in connection with four miles of avenues one hundred feet wide, form a connecting link between all the public grounds of the city.

But when, in addition to this generous policy in providing breathing places for the people the comparatively near proximity of the International Park at Niagara Falls (a little more than half an hour by rail) is considered, the City of Buffalo may be regarded as specially favored. In anticipation of the establishment of this park through the combined action of the State of New York and the Dominion of Canada it is proposed to form a grand boulevard uniting the two park systems, thus bringing Buffalo "within a two hours' drive," say the Commissioners, "of a resort attracting tourists from all parts of the civilized world."

THE PARKS OF BALTIMORE, SAN FRANCISCO AND SAVANNAH.

Among the finest public grounds in the United States, may be classed Druid Hill Park, a beautiful tract of about seven hundred acres, with finely diversified surface, and presenting from its towering hill extended views of the surrounding country. Its lawns, its forest, its pines, its wilderness, its lakes and fish ponds, make up a combination of all the features that are essential to the popularity of a park. The Baltimoreans are justly proud of it, and have embellished it with many ornamental structures that harmonize with and add to the natural attractions of the place. Druid Hill is traversed by fourteen miles of carriage roads, two miles of bridle paths and fourteen miles of walks. In its extent of land surface, it is almost equal to Central Park.



Crotona Park—The Dell.

In addition, Baltimore possesses the following public pleasure-grounds under control of the Park Commission : Patterson Park, fifty acres ; Riverside Park, seventeen acres and a quarter ; and Federal Hill Park, eight acres and a quarter, making an aggregate of seven hundred and seventy-six acres and a half.

According to the last census, the population of San Francisco was 233,936, and it has increased since then to at least a quarter of a million. This is about one-sixth the present number of inhabitants in New York, which it surpasses in park area in the proportion of six to one, for while San Francisco, as shown by the statement on another page, has one acre to every 211, New York has but one acre to every 1,363 of its residents. The Golden Gate City possesses a total park area of 1,181 acres, in which are included one great pleasure-ground of 1,040 acres, the balance, 141 acres, being divided into local parks, squares and botanical and zoological gardens. The great park overlooks the bay, and the land and marine views seen from its elevated points are probably among the most attractive and picturesque presented by any park in the world. The park itself cannot justly lay claim to a place among pleasure grounds of the first class, for a considerable portion of its surface consists of sand wastes, which, however, are being rapidly brought under cultivation. Much attention is given to rare and tropical plants, and the conservatory devoted to those marvels of the floral world, the orchids, is one of the most pleasing and interesting features of the park. The gigantic water lily of South America, known as the "Victoria Regia," with its huge circular leaves, twenty-two and twenty-three feet in circumference, has been raised here successfully from the seed. The deficiency of the park in woods—its natural condition is that of an almost treeless waste—is being rapidly supplied, over three hundred and twenty thousand trees of

many varieties, shrubs and flowering plants being set in two years, leaving in the nursery still no less than 116,550.

The City of Savannah, situated on a tract of almost level land, while it has only one large pleasure-ground, exceeds in proportion to its population even London or Paris in the number of its local parks and squares. These vary in area from one acre to an acre and a half, and are located two, three or four blocks apart, forming pretty, green medallions in the central part of the city. The Mayor of Savannah informs your Commission that the establishment of these breathing-places had the effect of doubling the value of the adjacent property, and there can be no doubt that they aided largely in improving the sanitary condition of the city. The whole park area is about sixty acres, of which one-half is included in the main park, the other half being distributed among twenty-four squares, many of which are planted with trees and flowering shrubs.

THE PARKS OF EUROPE.

PLEASURE GROUNDS OF LONDON—TWENTY-TWO THOUSAND ACRES.

European parks have been planned and laid out on the most liberal scale, and with the exception of certain tracts devoted to horticulture and particular purposes, they are mostly free over their whole surface, without restriction to visitors.

Thus they have come to be justly regarded as the playgrounds of the people, where young and old, and all classes and conditions are free to enjoy themselves, and roam over their broad plains and under the shade of their magnificent woods without unnecessary interference. Foremost among the great capitals of the old world in the space devoted to public use, deservedly stand Paris and London, and your Commission feel that this report would be incomplete were it to pass over without a brief notice the liberal provision which the municipal authorities of these cities have made for their people in this important respect.

Within, and in the near vicinity of its suburbs, the City of London has a park area of over twenty-two thousand acres, a space, the extent of which will be fully appreciated and realized when compared with the exceedingly limited acreage of the tracts laid out in the City of New York, and the total area of which does not exceed eleven hundred acres. In fact the territory covered by the parks of London is only four thousand acres less than the whole Island of Manhattan and the Twenty-third and Twenty-fourth Wards combined. The area of our city is about twenty-six

thousand acres, and this space is divided into two nearly equal parts by the Harlem river.

A glance at the map of London shows at once the importance which has been given to this conspicuous and interesting feature of the gigantic British capital, a capital which the American metropolis is destined even within the lifetime of a portion of the present generation to surpass in population. Throughout its vast extent its surface is literally studded with parks varying in area from fifty to seven hundred acres, while in the suburbs and within easy access are Richmond Park containing over two thousand acres, Windsor Park with nearly four thousand, Hampton Court and Bushy Park having a combined area of over one thousand eight hundred. Besides the parks of over fifty acres there are, as indicated on the map of that metropolis, over a hundred of lesser extent, so that London may be literally denominated the park city. Five minutes' walk in almost any direction takes the visitor to one of these breathing spots, while the larger grounds, such as Hyde, Regents', St. James' and Victoria Parks, Kew Gardens, and others of nearly equal extent, can be reached by the great rapid transit routes which traverse London at all points.

The British metropolis, notwithstanding the magnificent provision which had been made for the health and recreation of its people, has outdone itself within the past two years by the appropriation of an immense tract of land, called Epping Forest, covering an extent of six thousand acres, or about one-half the area of Manhattan Island.

Through the courtesy of the Mayor of London and the different park authorities of that municipality, your Commission has been placed in possession of much interesting and valuable information concerning their public grounds. Among the official publications forwarded in response to a request were the voluminous reports relating to the proceedings for the acquisition of this splendid territory, and



Pelham Bay Park—From Pelham Bridge, Looking Southerly.

two other tracts known as Burnham Beeches, containing 374 acres, and West Ham Park, having 80, making an addition of 454 acres.

Of the 6,000 acres in Epping Forest, 3,500 belonged to the corporation of London on a public trust to keep them open forever. The balance, consisting of lands to which a questionable title had been acquired by long use and occupation, cost £286,159, or nearly \$1,500,000. This, of course, does not represent the actual value of the land, as the purchase was effected by arbitration, and the title in numerous cases was quieted by the payment of one-tenth of its real worth. This grand expanse of territory, secured—as one of the published reports from which we obtain these particulars states—for the population of the east side, was acquired after many years of litigation against the claimants. These claimants had enclosed the lands “for the exclusion of the commoners,” and a long, protracted contest resulted, terminating in the success of the people. To the persistence, and resolution of the citizens, and to the pluck and determination, as well as the sagacious liberality of their municipal government, is London to-day indebted for this grand addition to its park area. In Epping Forest it possesses a place of recreation that is only surpassed in extent by two other public pleasure-grounds in the world—if we except our own inchoate Yellowstone—the Forest of Fontainebleau, which embraces within its bounds a grand domain of 42,000 acres, and the Forest of St. Germain, which contains 8,000. The largest park in the world is, however, about 36 miles from Paris, and is, therefore, not so accessible to visitors.

In Epping Forest are to be found trees of every species indigenous to the island; green level stretches, hills, rocks, streams—in a word every element of sylvan beauty. And when to this is added the grand expanse, covering a territory over ten miles in length by nearly six in width, we are

not surprised at the claim of one of the officials when speaking of its magnificence, "I know of no capital," said he, "(and I have seen most of the European capitals), that will have a playground, if I may use the word, which will at all approach this in beauty."

We do not propose—indeed the space to which a report of this character must necessarily be limited, forbids us—to enter into details with regard to the parks of the British metropolis, and we must, therefore, content ourselves with the following list of those which cover an extent of fifty acres and over, although there are many of less area which are among the most beautiful and attractive :

	Acres.
Epping Forest.....	6,000
Richmond Park	2,253
Windsor Park.....	3,800
Hampton Court and Bushy Park.....	684
New Park and Gardens	300
Wimbledon Common.....	628
Hyde Park	400
St. James' Green and Regents' Park..	450
Hampstead Heath.....	240
Kensington Gardens.....	290
Alexandra Park.....	192
Greenwich Park.....	174
Finsbury Park	115
Southwark Park.....	63
Blackheath	267
Hackney Downs.....	50
Tooting Beck Common.....	144
Tooting Graveny Common	63
Clapham Common.....	220
Burnham Beeches.....	374
Bostall Heath	55
West Ham Park.....	80
Plumstead Common	110
Wormwood Scrubs	194
Peckham Rye.....	64

When to this list are added the parks of small extent, the "downs," "commons," and "fields," we shall have an aggregate of about twenty-two thousand acres.

It must not be supposed on account of its immense area that any portion of these grounds are mere waste lands. On the contrary, there is no city where land is more valuable than in the English capital, which is yearly pushing its boundary at a rapid rate into the surrounding country, and whose population of nearly four millions and a half will, ere another decade has elapsed, at its present rate of increase, have passed the limit of five millions. All of these great breathing places are free to the people for use and recreation.

In the report of the London Board of Public Works for 1882—this Board having under its jurisdiction and management only a portion of the public grounds—we read that “the principal works in Finsbury Park during the year have been the formation of a gymnasium for the free use of the frequenters of the park, the setting apart of a portion of ground for the use of lawn tennis players, and the provision of swings for the special use of children. The swings have,” it is added, “been placed in a part of the park where the children can enjoy this form of recreation without being interfered with.”

“In Southwark Park the Board have afforded every facility for the playing of cricket,” and we are also informed that Blackheath “is the largest open space under the control of the Board,” and that “it has for many years past been much used for the games of cricket, football and golf.” Hampstead Heath, it appears, is a disputed ground between the Board and the cricketers, who insist on playing in a part of the park which is reserved for other visitors “who find there recreation in strolling among the furze and fern which abound on the West Heath.” To the claim of the disputants the Board reply that “so far from desiring to limit the pleasure of cricketers on Hampstead Heath it has during the year expended a considerable sum of money in forming cricket grounds on the only part really suitable

for the purpose." Hackney Common is to suffer no alterations in its natural features; it is only proposed generally "to improve them and render them more serviceable for purposes of recreation." It is very evident that the London Board of Works has a proper appreciation of the uses and purposes for which parks are designed, and that nothing will be left undone on their part to make them, in every way possible, available for the enjoyment of the people.

The zoological and botanical gardens of London may properly be classed with its parks, as they are a source of not only pleasant enjoyment but a practical means of instruction to the multitude of visitors by whom they are daily thronged. Large sums of money are spent on their maintenance, the authorities rightly judging that parsimony in matters that afford legitimate amusement to the public is false economy.

THE PARKS OF PARIS—ONE HUNDRED AND SEVENTY-TWO THOUSAND ACRES.

Conspicuous among the public works of the French capital, its architectural embellishments, its wealth of art, its wide boulevards, its grand squares, places and fountains, are its magnificent parks, the pride of its people and the glory of the city. No expense has been spared to make them in every way worthy of the great metropolis of which they form so important a part, and of which they constitute one of the chief attractions to visitors from all parts of the world. The parks of Paris have long been celebrated for the grand scale on which they have been planned and the generous policy which inspires their administration and management.

Unlike the great breathing-places of London, which are distributed not only in the suburbs but in the very heart of that metropolis, the lungs of Paris with a few exceptions have been placed at its environs.



Pelham Bay Park—Prospect Hill, Looking Westward.

Of the thousand acres of gardens and open spaces known as squares and places, the Champs Elysees, the Place de la Concorde, the Place de la Bastille, the Place Vendome, Square Victor, the Gardens of the Tuilleries, the Place de la Trocadero, the Square du Ranelagh, Parc Monceau, Parc de Montsouris, Parc des Buttes Chaumont, the Garden of the Luxembourg, the Garden of the Palais Royal are among the most celebrated, but the greater number are more remarkable for their architectural surroundings, and, as in the particular instances of the Parc du Butte Chaumont and the Parc Monceau, for the exquisite taste and artistic beauty displayed in their design and cultivation.

The Parc des Buttes Chaumont covers an area of sixty-two acres, and affords a striking illustration of the marvels which can be wrought under the most unfavorable circumstances by the art of the landscape gardener. The part of Paris where this beautiful creation is located had long borne a bad reputation as the resort of the most depraved and dangerous characters. The land was so sterile and the locality so unhealthy that it was regarded as one of the plague spots of the city. It had, in fact, become such a public nuisance as to force itself on the attention of the authorities and to compel the application of some remedy. The matter was submitted to competent engineers, and under their skill the plague spot was converted into one of the most beautiful of the many attractive resorts of the capital. An army of laborers was employed, the stagnant pools of water and unsightly quarry excavations gradually disappeared, hundreds of thousands of cubic yards of new earth were deposited upon the barren surface, a spacious lake was formed, from whose centre rose a rocky islet crowned with a miniature temple, and caves and grottoes and statues and parterres completed a *tout ensemble* that may well excite the admiration of visitors. This transformation of course could only be effected at great cost, but

the city has been more than repaid in the improvement which has been made, not only in the health of the locality but in the largely increased value of neighboring and city property.

The Parc Monceau is another instance of the triumph of landscape gardening. Like that already described it is wholly indebted for its beauty to the resources of this art. It was literally destitute of everything that could aid the engineer in his work. The twenty acres of barren land embraced within its bounds were uninviting to a degree, and to this doubtless the people of Paris are indebted for one of the prettiest and most attractive garden spots in their city. It was such an eye-sore and a nuisance that it became necessary to get rid of it, and it was finally consigned to the skill of one of the first engineers of the day. Liberal appropriations were placed at his disposal, and as the work advanced and the design was revealed in a combination of green lawns, sparkling fountains, glittering cascades, shady walks in the midst of flowery parterres, miniature caves, grotto-like recesses, and moss and ivy-covered rocks, the people rejoiced at a change at once so pleasant and so profitable; gratifying the sense of beauty inherent in the lowest natures and adding considerably to the value of the city property at the same time. As a specimen of ornamental gardening the Parc Monceau is said to be unsurpassed, and no expense is spared to maintain its beauty in this respect unimpaired.

These exquisite garden tracts, however perfect they may be as showing what can be done by the resources of engineering skill, are literally dwarfed into insignificance by the two grand public pleasure grounds, the magnificent breathing-places which are celebrated among the great parks of the world. The Bois de Boulogne and the Bois de Vincennes have a combined area of nearly five thousand

acres, the latter being the larger of the two by about three hundred acres.

The Bois de Boulogne is the favorite resort of visitors, and is traversed by broad boulevards, beautiful drives and well-shaded walks. Lakes of artificial construction, supplied by artesian wells and beautified by islands, diversify the scenery. A French park without a waterfall would be incomplete, and the Bois de Boulogne has several, with the usual accessories of rocks thrown together in the most fantastic forms. A cascade, which forms one of the principal attractions in the scenery of the Bois, is forty feet in height, and as there is always a liberal supply of water the effect is said to be very natural. The lakes are furnished with boats, and as the islands are provided with restaurants visitors have ample opportunity for enjoyment, while the zoological gardens, the theatre and concert hall, the race-course and other attractions afford sufficient variety to please every taste. The Bois de Boulogne is, in a word, one of the most picturesque and pleasant in addition to being one of the largest parks in the world. In the general plan of the grounds the object of the designer was to surprise and please the visitor by the numberless variety of views, and to this end he has combined, whenever it could be done with effect, all the attractions of the natural landscape.

The Bois de Vincennes is inferior in point of beauty and artificial embellishment to the Bois de Boulogne, but it is nevertheless a popular resort, and contains a spacious parade-ground and ranges for rifle practice, which give it a particular interest to a large portion of the population. It contains several lakes, spanned by ornamental bridges, and connected by an artificial river three miles in length. There are also islands, extensive woods, pleasant promenades, a model farm, a race-course, and pretty meadow tracts where the children are free to enjoy themselves without hindrance. Altogether the Bois de Vincennes is one of the finest

resorts of Paris, and is indispensable to the inhabitants of the east side of the city. The Municipal Government, it should be stated here, derives a considerable revenue from leases and privileges granted to the keepers of restaurants and the caterers to the various public amusements, which are permitted not only within these two great parks but on other pleasure-grounds inside the city and its suburbs.

The Gardens of Versailles, with the Grand and Little Trianon, are bewildering in their variety, and the magnificent structures, with their superb decorations, their rich, costly furniture, their works of art in painting and sculpture, their historical memories, their gorgeous saloons, their numerous fountains, lakes, and basins, form a combination that is unsurpassed even in Paris itself.

The Park of St. Cloud, about five or six miles west of the city, has an area of over one thousand acres, and in the extended views which it presents of Paris and the surrounding country from its highest points it has a decided advantage over all the public pleasure-grounds in or near the capital. Its plan is most elaborate and includes broad avenues, beautiful promenades, fine tracts of meadow, lakes, cascades and fountains.

The Forest of St. Germain, within half an hour of Paris by rail, although more distant than those already referred to, is a favorite resort of all classes, and though of great extent, surpassing even Epping Forest in area, having an expanse of eight thousand acres, it is intersected by fine walks and drives, and is enclosed by a substantial stone wall. This grand domain is free throughout its full extent to the great throngs which on certain fete days enjoy themselves among its splendid groves.

Exceeding all the great parks, not only of Paris but of the world, the Forest of Fontainebleau stands alone in the vast extent of its territory. It has an area of forty-two thousand acres, and is sixty-three miles in circumference.



Pelham Bay Park—From Hunter's Island, Looking South.

Every variety of scenery is to be found within its limits ; valleys, gorges, caverns, lakes, brooks, wide-spreading meadows, grand old woods, with an endless variety of trees ; hills that almost rise to the dignity of mountains, from which glimpses even of the distant capital can be seen in clear weather. Fontainebleau can be reached in about an hour and a quarter from the city, and is the most distant of the public grounds, which may properly be claimed as a part of the park system of the French capital. A detailed description of the many attractions, prominent among which are the palace and the surrounding gardens, laid out in the most elaborate style, would require a volume to do justice to the subject.

The following list comprises only the principal public grounds in Paris, or within easy approach by water or by rail :

	Acres.
The Forest of Fontainebleau.....	42,000
“ St. Germain.....	8,000
The Bois de Boulogne.....	2,200
“ Vincennes	2,500
Park of St. Cloud.....	1,000
“ Buttes Chaumont.....	62
“ Monceau	22
“ Montsouris.....	40
Garden of the Tuilleries.....	50
“ Luxembourg.....	40
“ Plants	22

These are but a few of the long list of parks, forests, gardens, etc., which adorn the city of Paris and its suburbs, and which it is estimated contain in the aggregate no less than 172,000 acres. Of course, of this vast territory the smaller portion only is in its immediate neighborhood, but to the hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers who often

extend their daily summer trips and excursions to a distance of thirty, forty and fifty miles by boat and by railroad, even the Forest of Fontainebleau will not appear to be too distant for the health and pleasure-seeking Parisians, or the temporary sojourners in their city. The suburbs of Paris seem to be at several points continuous parks, and the majestic boulevards which connect its gardens and pleasure-grounds form, it may be said with truth, the crowning glory of the whole. And yet Paris, famed for the splendid provision which it has made for its people, is, in the topography of its environs and its natural advantages, far inferior to our own metropolis. The Twenty-third and Twenty-fourth Wards and the adjacent sections of Westchester possess natural beauties which neither London nor Paris nor any city in the world can rival. Nature has done for us what has only been accomplished by both those cities at an immense expenditure of money, time and labor, and under the direction of the most skillful and experienced engineers. All that is necessary to fit *our* parks for public use is a comparatively trifling expenditure, for which there will in time be a hundred-fold return to the municipal treasury.

THE PARKS OF VIENNA.

The Austrian capital is justly distinguished for the picturesque beauty of its surroundings, and for the many beautiful parks not only within its boundaries but at varying distances of from two to fifteen miles. Its great park, the Prater, is almost as well-known as Vienna itself, and is, in the literal meaning of the term, the people's pleasure-ground, over the surface of which, whether on the green sward or through its woods and groves, they are free to roam as they please. Its fifteen hundred acres are divided into grand drives, that in favorable weather are crowded with all kinds of vehicles and all classes of people, ap-

parently no distinction being made on account of rank or position; and broad meadows and shady groves which are thronged with visitors, who find both pleasure and refreshment in the numerous restaurants, cafes, theatres, circuses, bowling-alleys, shooting galleries, gymnasiums, swings, etc., etc. While ample space is allowed for the recreation of the people, which is the chief object of this old and favorite resort, little attention is given to the mere embellishment of the park. The land itself is almost a dead level, and is devoid of all those attractive features which are to be found in many of the great parks of Europe. The Viennese, however, look upon it as the playground of all classes, and any attempt to change its character in this particular by landscape gardening, or any other ornamentation that would interfere with their full enjoyment, would never be tolerated. It was in the Prater that the International Exposition was held in 1873, and the buildings still remain, forming a striking and pleasing attraction to visitors.

Besides the Prater, there is the Volksgarten and the Hofgarten, which are handsomely cultivated tracts of about twenty acres that embellish a portion of the Glacis, a broad open space that formed a portion of the defenses of the old city, but which has been converted into fine promenades and laid out in regular plots. Like the Prater, it is a popular resort, provided with places of entertainment for the people. The Glacis nearly environs the ancient city and has an area of about five hundred acres. In addition to these public places, there are the Augarten, Brigittenau, the Stadt Park, the Botanical Gardens, the Belvedere Gardens, and smaller parks and squares, which, with those already named, make a total area of public grounds in the city and its immediate vicinity of about three thousand acres.

Independent of these parks, the Viennese are within easy reach of some of the most beautiful pleasure-grounds

in the world. The city is situated on a plain, overlooked by lofty hills, which form a portion of the range of the Tyrolean Alps. Among the valleys and on the slopes of these mountains are scenes of rare beauty. Every village within a radius of ten miles may be said to be the centre of a park, and thither the public flock on Sundays and holidays to enjoy themselves without let or molestation. Baden is set in the midst of parks, and there is a long list of others, among which, Laxenberg, Schonbrunn, and the park of Prince Schwartzberg, are prominent, and all of which are open to the people. The extent of the grounds inside and outside of the city cannot be less than eight thousand acres, or estimating the present population of Vienna at 800,000, in the ratio of one acre to every hundred inhabitants.

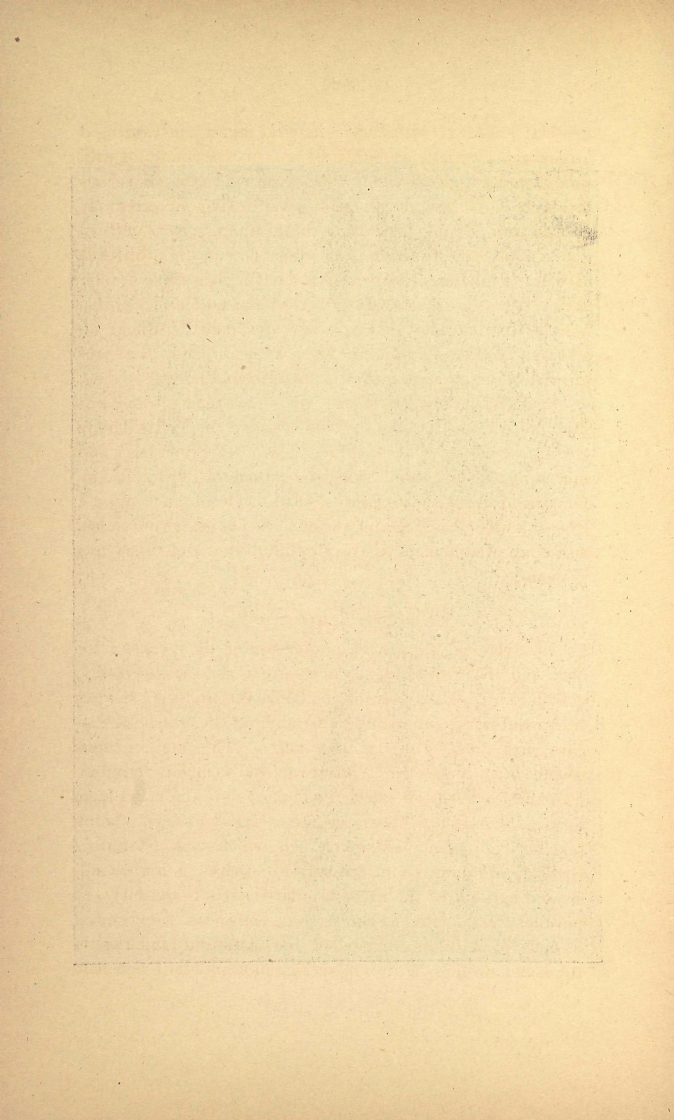
THE PARKS OF BERLIN.

While the Prussian capital is inferior in park area as compared with London and Paris, her municipal authorities and the Imperial Government have not been unmindful of the claims of the people in the matter of public pleasure-grounds. Of parks and squares Berlin has about sixty, differing in area from half an acre to over five hundred. The Thiergarten, which is the great pleasure resort of the people, has an area of about six hundred and fifty acres, including the Zoological Garden and the space inclosed as a hippodrome, which is one of the principal attractions to visitors. It is situated on the river Spree, and its chief features of interest are its groves of stately and venerable trees, its lakes and promenades.

The squares are tastefully arranged in various styles of gardening, and many of them are handsomely embellished with statuary and fountains. Berlin, however, is not dependent upon these for the recreation of her people, for within half an hour by rail are the great parks in the sub-



Pelham Bay Park—From Bartow's, Looking South.



urbs of Potsdam, with their splendid lakes, constituting a larger water surface probably than is to be found in any inland parks in the world. The form of these lakes and the sweep of the shores, now withdrawing in irregular curves, now jutting forward in bold, sharp promontories, heavily timbered to the water's edge, bestow an additional element of picturesque beauty upon the landscape. The area of these parks is about three thousand acres, pretty equally divided between land and water, and if to these we add the König's Garten, we have a magnificent pleasure-ground covering an extent of four thousand acres.

In addition to these there are the Frederick's Park, Humboldt Park, the Southeast Park, and the Little Thiergarten, which have a combined area of six hundred and fifty acres. The public pleasure-grounds of Berlin, as may be judged from these figures, have been planned upon a liberal scale. They aggregate at least five thousand acres, which allows one acre to every two hundred and thirty-five persons.

THE PARKS OF DUBLIN.

The Irish capital, with a population of about three hundred and fifty thousand, has in its great recreation-ground, called Phoenix Park, a tract of 1,753 acres, and with smaller tracts and squares distributed throughout the city, an aggregate park area of nearly 1,900 acres. This also includes several open spaces which it is proposed to devote to public use, and for the possession of which, we are informed from official sources, the necessary steps are at present being taken. The principal square, known as St. Stephen's Green, embracing about twenty-three acres, is highly cultivated and one of the most popular resorts in the city. A public-spirited citizen, Sir Arthur Guinness, the brewer, now Lord Ardilaun, expended one hundred and twenty thousand dollars in its embellishment, and it is now said

to be one of the most beautiful parks of its size in Europe. The Phoenix Park, on the contrary, depends almost wholly on its natural attractions, and these justly entitle it to a place among the first not only of Great Britain but of the Continent. It is situated on the banks of the River Liffey, a picturesque stream which flows directly through the city. The surface is undulating, and a considerable portion is covered with fine old woods that alternate with broad stretches of emerald lawns and dappled meadows, over which hundreds of tame deer roam at will. A botanical and a zoological garden add to the pleasure of the visitors, and both are well maintained.

PARKS OF AMSTERDAM.

Although the commercial metropolis of the United States has been known for more than a century by its present name, its ancient title of New Amsterdam has not been forgotten, and your Commission, in including Old Amsterdam among the number of the park cities of Europe, were actuated by a desire to revive the memories of the past and the early history and origin of the third greatest city of the world. In reply to their inquiries regarding the park area of Amsterdam, they were courteously furnished with the required information and an excellent map of the famous old Dutch capital. From the letter of Mayor Tienhoven and accompanying documents, they learn that the space laid out in parks and private grounds open to the people is about eight hundred acres, among which the principal, called Vondel Park, after the nation's great poet, Joast Van der Vondel, has an area of one hundred and fifty acres. This park occupies a conspicuous position on the map, and is particularly noticeable on account of its resemblance in form and outline to our own Central. Both are of oblong shape, and the position of the lakes and the general plan have many points of similarity. The level nature of

the country in which Vondel Park is located deprives it, of course, of that diversity of surface by which its New York counterpart is distinguished. Among the most noticeable of the works of art which embellish Vondel Park is a fine bronze statue of the poet in whose honor it has been named. Besides the principal pleasure-ground, there are twenty-three squares and parks under the administration of the city, and a still larger number which are free to the people. The map of Amsterdam shows many a green spot along the lines of its numerous canals, on the banks of which, in the language of Mayor Tienhoven, "fine shade trees, mostly elms, are planted, affording a grateful and agreeable shade to the pedestrian."

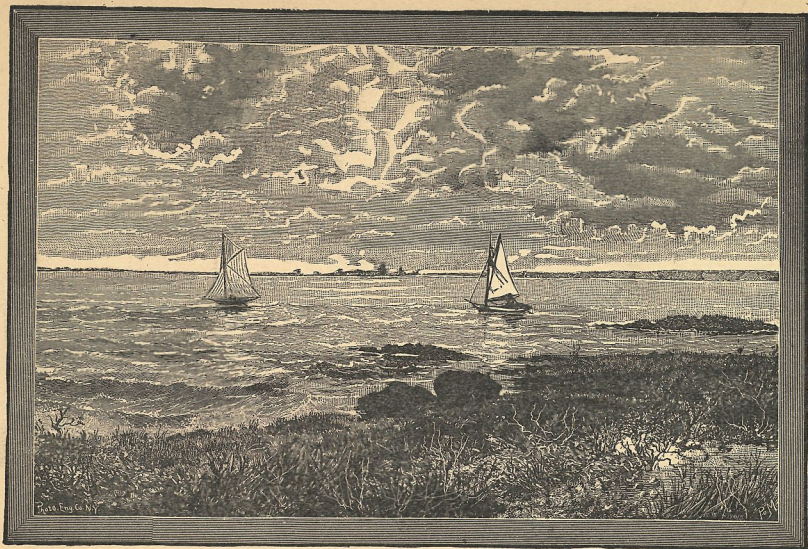
Taking into account the difference of the population, we find that Amsterdam has been generous towards its people in the matter of parks compared with the parsimony of its whilom trans-Atlantic namesake. And this generosity is the more striking, as its land has been wrested from the ocean inch by inch, as it were, and is held by each succeeding generation under a tenure of continual struggle with the same element, involving incessant watchfulness, unremitting labor and constant outlay.

THE PARKS OF BRUSSELS.

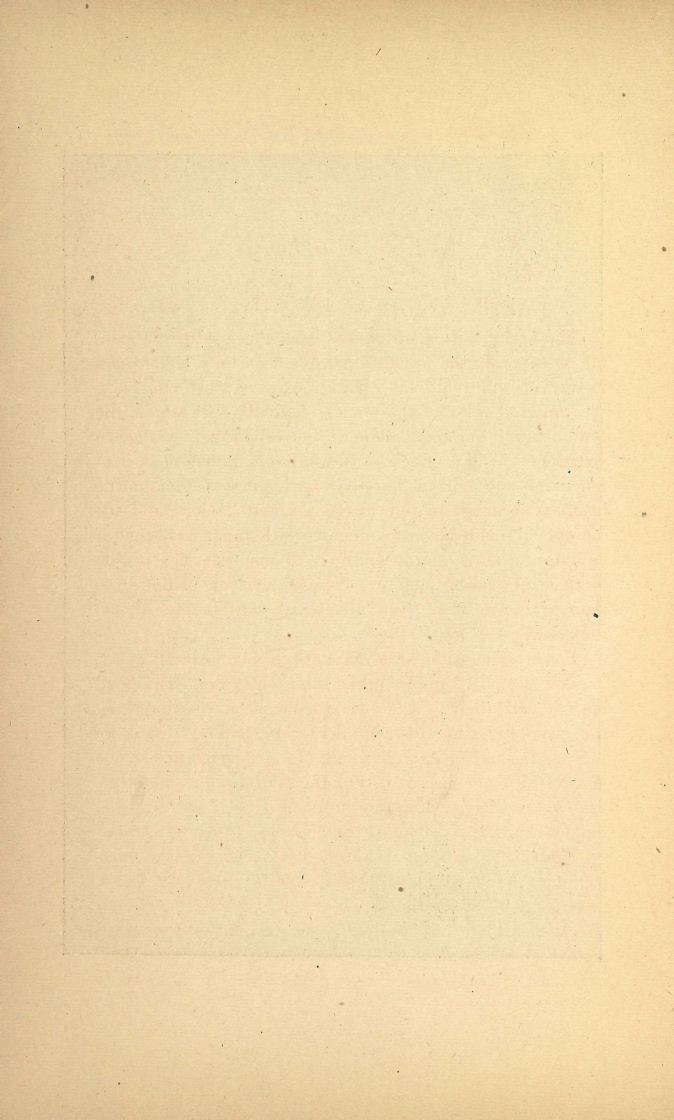
From the official documents and excellent map of the Belgian capital forwarded by its municipal authorities to your Commission, it appears that the area devoted to public grounds in that city and suburbs is at least eight hundred acres, exclusive of many other pleasure-grounds which do not appear in the list. The principal is the Bois de Cambre, containing over three hundred acres; the Parc de Bruxelles thirty, the Parc Leopold twenty-five, and at least forty others varying in extent from one to ten and twelve acres. Many of these parks are arranged as gardens, and

adorned with fountains, statues, and other works of art, and are approached by boulevards which compare favorably even with those of Paris. The principal avenues are thirty feet wider than the boulevards of our own city. The Bois de Cambre is to Brussels what the Bois de Boulogne is to Paris, and the art of the landscape gardener has added largely to its natural advantages.

Brussels, like Paris, Vienna, and Berlin, has in its suburbs many pleasant resorts to which the public have access, but in the field of Waterloo, less than half an hour distant by rail, it has a park, if it can be so designated, which has a particular attraction and interest for every visitor. As a place of public resort it has some claim to be classed among the public grounds of Brussels, although not properly included in its park area, which may be fairly estimated at a thousand acres, or one acre to every three hundred and fifty inhabitants.



Pelham Bay Park—Hunter's Island, Looking Easterly.



PARKS OF JAPAN.

PLEASURE GROUNDS OF THE CITY OF TOKIO.

The high position which has been conceded to the people of Japan in the world of art has been fully maintained in various international exhibitions, and particularly in the grand display of the world's industry with which the centennary of our Independence was celebrated over seven years ago. The products of the skill and genius of Japanese artists and artizans have become important items in the business accounts of our merchants and dealers, and the increase of our trade and commerce with Japan has brought us into intimate and friendly relations with the people of that interesting country, and given us an insight into their domestic and social life which was before almost impossible.

Your Commission, aware that not only in floriculture but in the matter of public parks they occupy an advanced position, felt that a reference to the pleasure-grounds of the city of Tokio, the capital of the Empire, would be interesting and acceptable to all who are concerned in the movement for more parks. For the information which they have obtained regarding the public parks of Tokio they are indebted to the courtesy of the Japanese Consul.

The City of Tokio is celebrated not only for the number but for the extent and beauty of its parks, which are among the most cherished objects of popular regard and affection. There is, probably, no people in the world among whom the love of flowers is more strongly marked, or the art of landscape gardening brought to a higher state

of perfection. Their marvelous skill in the dwarfing of plants, by which the pine and other trees are reduced to lilliputian dimensions, is justly celebrated, and their artistic taste is shown in the production of artificial landscapes covering a space of fifty or sixty square feet, with hills, lakes, valleys and rivers faithfully represented, and with woods of living vegetation, but dwarfed in proportion to the other features of the scene.

On the ten national holidays, and the additional local festivals the people of Tokio, without distinction of class, seek recreation in the many playgrounds of the capital, taking particular delight in the display of chrysanthemums, the Imperial flower of Japan, the pœnies, the lotus, and particularly the cherry blossom, which is one of their favorite flowers. On such occasions the workshops are deserted, and the people, without distinction of age or sex, turn out *en masse* to witness the grand floral display prepared for them by the gardeners in charge of the public grounds. Here they revel in healthful recreation and enjoyment. The feast of the anniversary of the coronation of their first Emperor, who reigned twenty-six centuries ago, and which occurs on the 11th of February, is kept up with great enthusiasm.

Among the parks of Tokio, Wooyeno is distinguished, not only by its size but by the picturesque variety of its views, and particularly by its magnificent woods, composed mainly of the cherry tree of which there are many varieties, some of which are three or four centuries old, and which constitute a distinguishing feature in nearly all the Japanese public grounds. With an area of about twenty-five hundred acres, equal in extent to the Bois de Boulogne and Windsor Forest, it is laid out with admirable discrimination in the adaptation of its topographical features to the general design. The Lake Shinobashu, which is situated on one side of the park, is its chief

attraction, and is surrounded by a broad drive or boulevard about four hundred feet wide and four miles long. The lake itself is set in a framework of trees of many varieties, with occasional open spaces bright with flowering shrubs. This park is also distinguished as possessing the great temple which was erected over three centuries ago and dedicated to Tokugawa Eyeyasu, a Shogun (commander-in-chief of the army in feudal times) who was noted for his administrative abilities and his prowess in war. From the summits of the hills the great city of Tokio is seen spread out like a map, with the Sea of Japan and its beautiful islands visible in the distance. When General and Mrs. Grant visited Japan they were, as a mark of special honor, requested each to plant a tree in Tokio's principal park.

In 1881 the population of the Japanese capital was 886,000, but it is to-day estimated at one million; and as Wooyeno is about three miles from the centre of the city it is easily accessible to a large number of its inhabitants. It is open to the public at all times, and a competent force of police is in charge to maintain peace and order.

Shiba, the second largest park of Tokio, is five miles from Wooyeno, and is reached by horse-cars, the fare being six cents. It has an area of about twelve hundred acres, and is noted no less for its celebrated temple of Zojogee than for the Koyokan, or the Red Maple Palace, a structure of great size and built in the highest style of Japanese architecture, in which distinguished strangers are sumptuously entertained by the higher classes. There are many very beautiful views in this park, and several natural and artificial lakes in which the water lily, a special favorite with the Japanese, is cultivated with much care, not only for its floral beauty but for its edible root which is highly prized. Here, and in the lakes of other parks, but more particularly in Wooyeno, the gardeners produce not only the yellow but that rare plant the

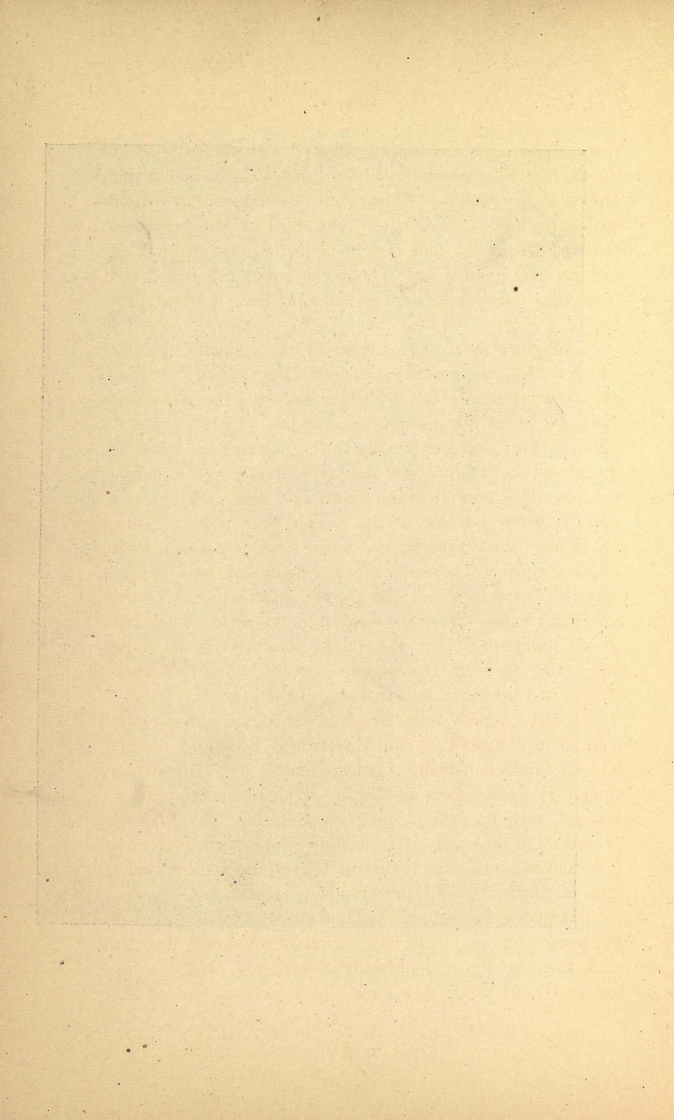
red water lily, which is noted as well for its exquisite perfume as for its peculiar color. The blossoms of some of these water lilies are ten inches in diameter.

On festivals and special occasions the Red Maple Palace is brilliantly illuminated with parti-colored lanterns of all sizes and almost every conceivable design, some fashioned in the most grotesque shapes. The lakes swarm with the gold and silver carp, of which many attain a length of three feet and a weight of from twelve to fifteen pounds. Large quantities of these fish become the prey of the wild duck which frequent the lakes in immense flocks, and which feed upon them with impunity, as the shooting of the birds is prohibited by law. Of this particular fish the finest specimens are found in Wooyeno Park. The kingio is another species of gold fish, for the cultivation of which the Japanese have long been distinguished, and even the form of which they have succeeded in materially changing by their skill in the art of pisciculture.

Mookojima, is the third in extent of the public grounds of Tokio, being a little more than three miles in length by a quarter of a mile in width, and containing about five hundred and fifty acres. The river Sumida, on which the city is situated, forms a part of its boundary and affords the means of transportation to the thousands who visit the park. Steamboats ply to and fro on special occasions during the spring and summer, carrying thousands of visitors for a moderate fare to the park of the great river, the banks of which are thickly planted with the favorite cherry tree. Those who prefer the more primitive method of conveyance can hire the Japanese pleasure-boat, with its deck house and propelled by oars, at the low rate of a dollar and a half a day. This covers the expense of such music as may be desired and the wages of the attendants, who not only row, but perform other necessary work. In the spring when the cherry trees are in full bloom por-



Pelham Bay Park—East Chester Bay—South of Pelham Bridge.



tions of the park are literally packed with admiring spectators, for whom the cherry blossom has a charm amounting almost to fascination. These trees are not only cultivated with the greatest care, but by the skill of the gardeners they are so trained and fashioned during their growth as to form long lines of arches over the roads and paths, and from these arches clusters of blossoms hang in great profusion.

In this park there are many small but beautiful lakes, in which anglers are permitted to fish on payment of a nominal sum—twenty-five cents for a whole day's piscatorial amusement. The tea-houses and restaurants are light and graceful structures, and add largely to the picturesque effect of the grounds. The visitors are not only allowed to fish in the lakes but to swim in the river, and the park is open over its whole surface to the people who find a pleasant shade from the sun under the dense foliage of the thickly planted woods. There is, indeed, only one of the principal parks of Tokio in which the people are restricted to the roads and walks—Wooyeno—and here the notice so familiar to the habitues of our Central is displayed in Japanese characters warning the people not to injure the vines, shrubs and branches, and to keep off the grass.

Asakusa, a park of five hundred acres, is situated a mile from Wooyeno, and is called after the Buddhist temple which forms a conspicuous feature among its many attractions. It possesses a theatre, a circus, many tea-houses, besides archery grounds and amusements for children. Its woods of pine and cedar occupy a large part of its surface, and beneath their luxuriant foliage the visitors find a grateful shade from the fervid summer sun.

Fukagawa, the sea-side park, is situated on an island of the same name in Yeddo Bay, which is connected directly with the city by an admirably constructed bridge seven hundred and twenty feet long. This park is one of the

most attractive of the many resorts in and near the city, and is laid out with excellent taste as a public garden. It contains four hundred acres.

Asukayama, which is about seven and a half miles from the city, is situated between two lofty hills, the slopes of which are in parts covered with the indispensable cherry tree. It is celebrated for its extensive views, and particularly for the romantic beauty of the Takino, the course of which is broken by numerous cascades as it flows on through the park to join the waters of the Sumida. The Asukayama is said to be one of the most beautiful of the parks of the Japanese capital, and although among the most distant, is visited not only during festivals but at other times by large numbers of pleasure-seekers. This park has an area of about three hundred acres, and is particularly noted for its high grass, so high in fact that it forms quite an agreeable shade, and is much frequented by the visitors, particularly by the youth of the city.

Besides the grounds around the Imperial Palace, the residence of the Mikado, there are four magnificent gardens situated at different points, which have an aggregate area of over two thousand acres, and which are thrown open to the people during the ten national holidays. There are in addition to these and the public parks, one hundred and forty local parks or squares, varying in area from one to five or six acres. Many of these are arranged as gardens and are pleasant features in the general plan of the city. Indeed, every house, except the dwellings of the very poor, has a garden in front and a plot in the rear for the cultivation of kitchen vegetables.

The total area of the large public grounds of Tokio is estimated, as will be seen from the following table, at nearly 6,000 acres, or one acre to every 167 inhabitants :

	Acres.
Wooyeno	2,200
Shiba	1,200
Mookojima	550
Asakusa	500
Fukagawa	400
Asukayama	300
	<hr/>
	5,150
	<hr/>

If to these are added the smaller parks, squares and gardens, the area will be increased to nearly 6,000 acres. Tokio itself has perhaps a larger area than any other city in the world in proportion to its population, having a circumference of ninety miles. In Wooyeno there are well arranged museums of natural history, in which there are extensive collections of the fauna of the Japanese Islands.

Many of the Chisai-Koyen, as the small parks are called to distinguish them from the Okii Koyen or great pleasure grounds, are exquisitely laid out in the style of Japanese gardening.

MAP OF WOYENO PARK.

NOTE.—Since the account of the parks of Tokio was written the Commission received from the Governor of that city an elaborate map of Wooyeno Park, a copy of which is herewith given. No change has been made from the original, the Japanese characters being reproduced as they are printed thereon, though necessarily on a much reduced scale. The lake (Shinobashu) is about a mile and a half long and nearly a mile wide.

CONCLUSIONS.

AREA OF LANDS RECOMMENDED FOR PARKS AND PARKWAYS.

From the information obtained by your Commission, after diligent inquiry and minute investigation, they have arrived at the following conclusions, which they believe are fully warranted and sustained by the facts and results presented in their report :

1. That the sanitary welfare of our metropolis and the physical recreation and development of its inhabitants demand an increase of its park area, commensurate not only with its present wants but with its future and rapidly increasing necessities.

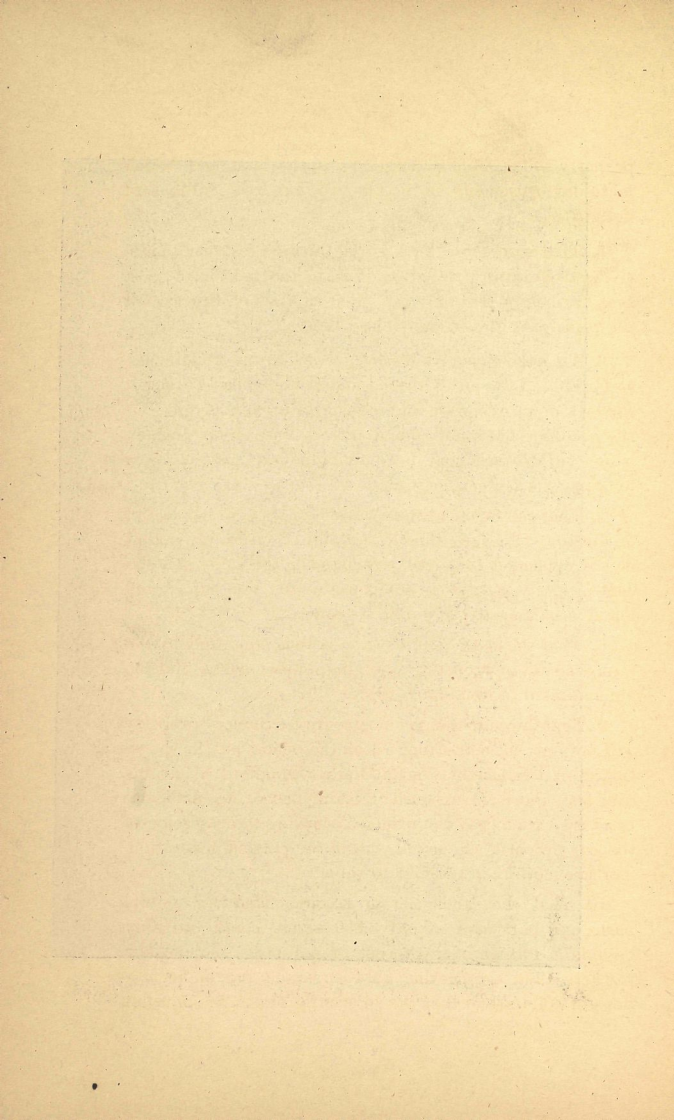
2. That while over one million of souls have been added to our population since 1853, when Central Park was created, the area of our public grounds is to-day less than one-half what it was then, as compared with the number of its inhabitants.

3. That while the grounds selected for the Central Park were rough and unsightly, and only brought into condition by a vast outlay, those here suggested to your Honorable Bodies (both inland and on the Sound,) are rarely endowed by nature for the purpose contemplated, and would attract admiring visitors from all parts of christendom, while diffusing the blessings of health and culture among our own citizens.

4. That Central Park has paid for itself and netted a handsome profit on its purchase, besides the valuable



Pelham Bay Park—View of Upland.



property which the city possesses in the land, and which is to-day estimated as worth two hundred millions of dollars.

5. That while New York is the third largest city in the civilized world in population, it is, in the matter of park area, far behind not only the great capitals of Europe but the principal cities of the United States.

6. That the cause which has made our metropolis lag so far behind the cities abroad and at home, has been, not the lack of appreciation and enterprise in her people, but the peculiar conformation and narrow limit of its domain, which, till it overleaped its confining bounds, gave no room for generous recreation grounds.

7. That the financial statistics not only of New York but of Boston, Chicago, Buffalo and other cities prove that money expended in parks, by enhancing the value of adjacent property, more than compensates for the outlay, and leaves a balance to the public treasury.

8. That the burden of taxation is thus equalized by the improvement of property adjoining public parks and the enhancement of its taxable value.

9. That the increased tax income from enhanced property will not only meet the interest on the bonds, but, as shown by the experience of Central Park, will afford a surplus over and above the expense of maintenance, etc., sufficient in a few years to pay the principal, leaving in possession of the city property which will, within the present generation, increase more than ten-fold in value.

10. That the lands herein recommended for public parks and parkways—about 3,800 acres—could probably be obtained at an average cost of not more than \$2,000 per acre, thus aggregating between seven and eight millions of dollars, and that the adjacent grounds, the moment

an act should be passed dedicating the sites selected to public use, would be very largely enhanced in value.

11. That the bonds which will be issued for the purchase of the lands recommended can be at present negotiated at $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., or one-half the interest paid on the Central Park bonds.

12. That the land required for parks should be secured while it can be had at its present minimum value, instead of waiting several years when costly improvements shall have been erected thereon, which would preclude the possibility of its being taken for the purpose designated.

13. That as no park system can be regarded as complete without suitable tracts for botanical and zoological gardens, your Commission have provided for these in the selection of sites. They have also kept in view the necessity of making provision at the present time for the World's Fair, and other industrial exhibitions, which will in all probability be held from time to time in New York, or its immediate vicinity, so long as our state shall hold its present supremacy as the Empire State of the Union.

14. That the facilities afforded by the present, and which will be largely increased by the projected, lines of rapid transit, place the proposed parks nearer to the population of New York, and render them more accessible, than Central Park when it was established.

15. That the population of the City of New York at the end of ten years herefrom will, according to its present ratio of increase, be in all probability nearly two and a half millions, and that by that time, that is in 1894, the means of land transportation will have been so improved that passengers can be carried from the Battery to the Van Cortlandt, Bronx and Pelham Bay Parks in thirty minutes.

16. That the wants of our citizen-soldiers are entitled to immediate consideration, and that provision should be made, as recommended by the commander of the First Division of the National Guard, on the tract selected and known as the Van Cortlandt estate, for an ample parade-ground and suitable rifle range.

17. That as within this property there is a large tract of elevated land particularly adapted for the construction of a reservoir, and an abundance of suitable stone, and as the new Croton aqueduct is to run through it in a direct line from north to south, your Commission consider the possession of this site as especially desirable for these additional reasons.

18. That Central Park is wholly inadequate to the New York of to-day, that it fails to meet the wants of the people, that the proposed sites should be open for the unrestricted use of visitors, and that its already too limited area is to be still further reduced by the construction of transverse streets across its surface so necessary to secure easy communication between the population on its western and eastern boundaries.

19. That parks attract population, increase trade, invite visitors, and add largely to the embellishment and renown of the city.

20. That the proposed parks should be wholly rural in their character, that they should be grounds for the recreation of the people, and that only such improvements should be made as are absolutely necessary.

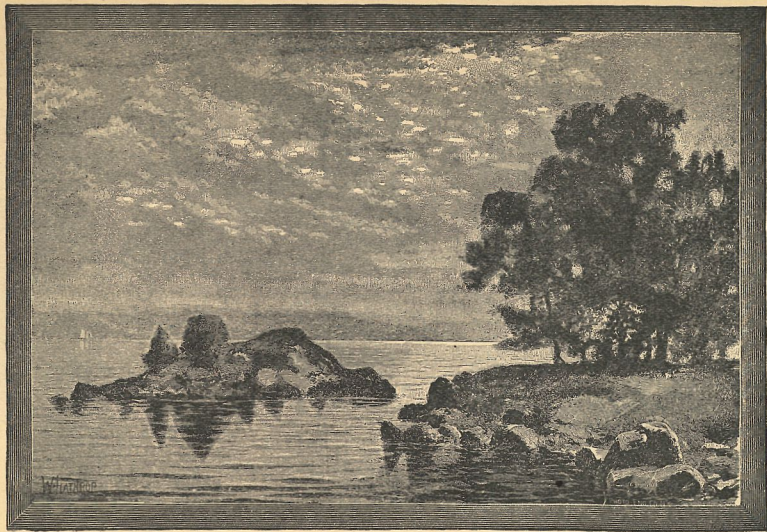
21. That the necessary steps should be at once taken, by the passage of an act of annexation, to secure possession of the large tract on the Sound herein recommended, and which embraces a territory of about seventeen hundred acres (including an island of one hundred and eighty), and having a water-front and drive of nine miles in length.

In the location of the sites your Commission have been governed wholly by considerations of economy, suitability, and the means of access. The lands selected are natural parks, requiring but little outlay to fit them for immediate use, and in this important respect differing materially from Central Park, the improvement of which involved an immense expenditure and a delay of at least ten years before it was wholly fit for public occupation. In the case of the Van Cortlandt, the Bronx, St. Mary's, Crotona, Claremont and Pelham Bay Parks, the land could, if purchased to-day, be immediately thrown open to and enjoyed by the people.

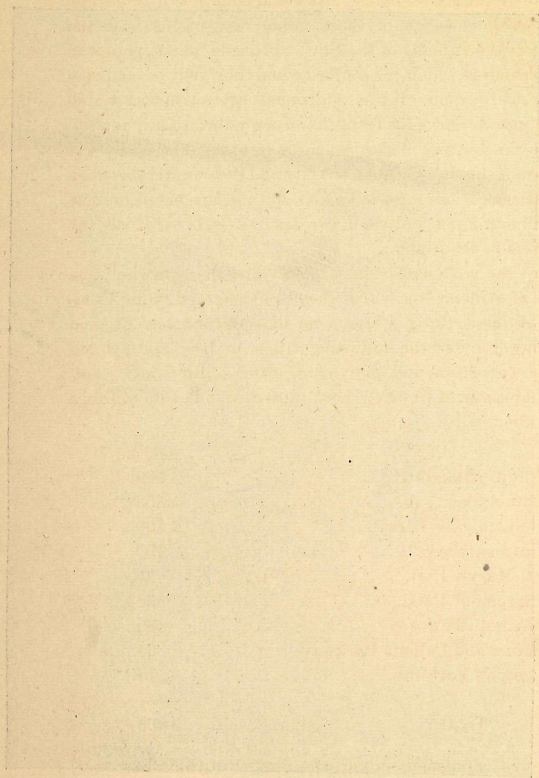
If the sites located by your Commission were now in the condition in which the land taken for Central Park was found when appropriated by the city, they could not be brought to their present state of picturesque loveliness by an outlay of untold millions. The artificial embellishments of that park, which cost over ten millions of dollars, and many more millions to maintain, are vastly inferior to the natural beauty of the parks herein recommended. In fact, nature has been so lavish of her gifts in this favored region as to render the aid of art unnecessary.

To bring the Central Park to its present state from the rough and unsightly condition of the land when bought, cost the city, with the original purchase price, over *twenty-five thousand dollars an acre*; for its beauties are wholly artificial in their character, made not by the hand of nature, but by the skill and labor of man; whereas in the tracts selected by your Commission no outlay is necessary beyond the mere cost of maintenance, the work of embellishment having been performed by the hand of nature alone.

The influence of this system of parkage will not be confined to the City of New York and the county of Westchester. It will permeate the whole State. Our imperial Commonwealth takes a just pride in the prosperity



Pelham Bay Park—Picnic Point.



and grandeur of its great metropolis, and the success of the metropolis reacts upon the cities and counties of the State. Though the location of these noble institutions is in the city, yet the citizens of the State are made participators in the pleasures which they afford when they visit us, and may justly feel proud of the additional attractiveness which these grand parks lend to the metropolis. They tend to weave thicker and closer the cords of union, sympathy and a common destiny between the city and the country, between the citizens of our crowded marts and the farmers of bordering Chautauqua and St. Lawrence, as well as of all the counties of the State.

For the reasons herein set forth and the overwhelming array of evidence by which they are sustained, your Commission respectfully recommend the several tracts of land embraced under the following titles, to be appropriated for the recreation and enjoyment of the million and a half of inhabitants of the New York of to-day and of its millions yet to be :

	ACRES.
Van Cortlandt Park.....	1,069 $\frac{65}{100}$
Bronx Park.....	653
Pelham Bay Park.....	1,700
Crotona Park.....	135 $\frac{34}{100}$
St. Mary's Park	25 $\frac{35}{100}$
Claremont Park.....	38 $\frac{05}{100}$
Mosholu Parkway.....	80
Bronx and Pelham Parkway.....	95
Crotona Parkway.....	12
Total.....	3,808 $\frac{39}{100}$

Your Commission submit the Report of their Engineer, General Lane, giving the location and boundaries of the sites selected, and the approaches thereto.

They have also drawn and herewith submit for the consideration of your Honorable Bodies, the form of a bill, based on provisions already approved and adopted by the Legislature, for carrying out the recommendations of this report.

All of which is respectfully submitted.

Luther R. Marsh

Louis Fitzgerald President
Waldo Hutchins
C. L. Tiffany
Gerrit Mearns

W. W. Miles.
Thomas Crombie

John Mullaly
Secretary

ENGINEER'S REPORT.

ENGINEERS' OFFICE, 21 PARK PLACE, }
New York, December 26, 1883. }

Hon. Luther R. Marsh, President,

" Louis Fitzgerald,
" Waldo Hutchins,
" Chas. L. Tiffany,
" Wm. W. Niles,
" Geo. W. McLean,
" Thos. J. Crombie,

Commissioners appointed under chapter 253 of Laws of 1883 of the Legislature of the State of New York to select and locate lands for public parks in the Twenty-third and Twenty-fourth Wards of the City of New York and the vicinity thereof:

GENTLEMEN—Having been appointed surveyor to your Commission, and in obedience to the duties incumbent on said appointment, I beg leave to report as follows. Having officially examined and mapped the different localities which the Commission have selected and located for parks and parkways in the Twenty-third and Twenty-fourth Wards of the City of New York and vicinity, and approximately calculated the areas of said parks and parkways, I prepared a sketch map of the City of New York and vicinity (which map accompanies this report) showing the contour of the parks and parkways selected by your Commission in the Twenty-third and Twenty fourth Wards of the city and vicinity, and also showing the approaches and the means of transit to the same—both those in actual operation and those contemplated on land—while the water conveyances to Pelham Bay Park are too obvious, on the map exhibited, to need further description.

The following is a description of the boundaries and acreage of the several parks and parkways as selected by the Commission; it being understood that all internal streets and railroad rights of way, now existing and having been purchased and paid for by the City of New York, are herein deducted from the total acreage within the boundaries given.

First—VAN CORTLANDT PARK BOUNDARIES.

Beginning at the intersection of the easterly line of Broadway with the northerly line of the city of New York, running thence easterly along the northerly line or boundary of the city to the intersection of said line with the westerly line of Mount Vernon avenue; thence southerly along the line of Mount Vernon avenue to the junction of said westerly line of Mount Vernon avenue with the northerly line of Willard avenue; thence

westerly along said northerly line of Willard avenue, crossing Jerome avenue to the westerly line of Jerome avenue; thence along said westerly line of Jerome avenue in a southeasterly and southerly direction to the junction with the northerly line of Gunhill road; from thence westerly along the northerly line of Gunhill road, following its wanderings and extending on said northerly line of Gunhill road to a point two hundred and seventy-five (275) feet easterly and at right angles from the easterly boundary of the Croton aqueduct right of way; from thence crossing the Gunhill road at right angles for the full width of said Gunhill road; from thence in a straight line southerly of west to a point on the easterly side of Broadway aforesaid, ten feet southerly of the bridge over Tibbetts brook on said Broadway; from thence along the easterly line of Broadway in a northerly direction, following its windings to the place of beginning, containing about $1,132\frac{35}{100}$ acres; from which area is to be deducted the existing streets, roads and railroad right of way located within the before-described grounds, viz.: A street running from Mount Vernon avenue boundary line northerly toward McLean's lake, also Jerome avenue from intersection with Willard avenue northerly to city line; also Croton aqueduct right of way; also Mosholu avenue; also New York and Northern Railroad Company's right of way; also Mount Vernon avenue from Jerome avenue to Gunhill road; also Gunhill road from two hundred and fifty feet east of Croton aqueduct right of way to Van Cortlandt avenue; also a continuation of Gunhill road from Van Cortlandt Avenue to Broadway, all of which are within the boundaries aforesaid, and contain an acreage of $62\frac{4}{10}$ acres, which deducted from the acreage between the bounds as given, leave for Park purposes about $1,069\frac{65}{100}$ acres to be purchased if said park is adopted.

Second—BRONX PARK BOUNDARIES.

All the contents within the following boundary, viz.: Beginning at a point in the Twenty-fourth Ward of the City of New York, formed by the junction of the north line of Samuel street and the west bank of the Bronx river; from thence westerly along the northerly line of Samuel street to the easterly line of Bronx street; from thence northerly along said easterly line of Bronx street to the northerly line of Ann street; from thence westerly along the northerly line of Ann street to the easterly line of Boston road; from thence northerly along said easterly line of the Boston road to a point in line with the northerly line of Kingsbridge road; from thence westerly along the northerly line of Kingsbridge road to the easterly line of the Southern Boulevard; from thence northerly, along and following the easterly line of the Southern Boulevard, to the northerly line of St. John's College property; from thence, crossing the Southern Boulevard and following the northerly boundary of the St. John's

College property northwesterly, to the easterly line of the right of way of the New York & Harlem Railroad Co. ; from thence along said easterly line of said right of way, and following its course northeasterly to a point about three hundred (300) feet northeasterly of the northerly line of Water street, to a point formed by the junction of the prolongation westward of the northerly line of Morris street, as laid down on a partition map and survey made by Egbert L. Viele, Civil Engineer, under an order of the Supreme Court, bearing date the 23d day of August, 1869; from thence along said prolongation of the northerly line of Morris street, crossing the Bronx river and along said northerly line of Morris street, to a point about twenty (20) feet easterly of the eastern line of Duncomb avenue, as shown on the map aforesaid; from thence, in a straight line southerly, and nearly parallel to and east of Monroe avenue, as shown on said map, to the northwesterly corner of land formerly belonging to John Hitchcock, as shown on said map; from thence, in a straight line southerly, to the southeastern corner of the Lorillard estate, as shown on map aforesaid; thence westerly along the southerly boundary of the Lorillard estate, as shown on said map, to the lands belonging to the Bronx Bleaching Company; thence southwesterly, southerly and westerly, along the easterly and southerly boundary of the Bronx Bleaching Company, to a point two hundred (200) feet easterly of the Bronx river; from thence southerly and parallel with the general line of the Bronx river, crossing the Boston road, to its southerly line; thence easterly along said southerly line of Boston road about five hundred and twenty (520) feet; from thence southerly, and parallel with the general courses of the Bronx river, and conforming thereto, about seven hundred (700) feet easterly of the general eastern line thereof, to a point formed by such line, and a prolongation of the southerly line of Kingsbridge road as now existing in the Twenty-fourth ward of the City of New York, between the Southern Boulevard and Bronx street; eastwardly across the Bronx river to the said line as drawn parallel to the general course of the Bronx river as aforesaid; from thence in a straight line crossing the Bronx river to the place of beginning, containing about six hundred and sixty-one sixty one-hundredths (661 60-100) acres, from which, deducting those portions of Fordham and Pelham avenue, and of the Southern Boulevard, comprising together about eight and six-tenths acres, included and enclosed in the within named boundaries, would leave for Park purposes about six hundred and fifty-three (653) acres, to be purchased if said park is adopted.

Third—PELHAM BAY PARK.

All those pieces or parcels of land situate and lying within Westchester County, contained within the following boundary, viz.:

Beginning on Long Island Sound at a point where a line drawn from the termination of the northern boundary of the City of New York touches

the Bronx river to the furthestmost northern point of the "Pass Rocks," a ledge of rocks north of Hunter's Island, would touch the shore line and waters of Long Island Sound; from thence westerly along said line between the New York City northern boundary and Long Island Sound to a point about one thousand feet easterly from the easterly side of the Old Boston Post-road, measuring from its junction with the extended northern boundary of New York City; from thence southerly to the nearest point on the northerly shore of Hutchinson's river; from thence southerly and easterly along the northerly shore of Hutchinson's river to a point formed by a line drawn due northwest from the most westerly point on Goose Island, in said Hutchinson's river or East Chester bay, and touching the northerly shore line of said Hutchinson's river; from this point southerly in a straight line to a point formed by the westerly line of the Harlem River and Portchester Railroad Company's right of way with the southerly shore line of East Chester bay or Hutchinson's river; from thence in a straight line to the northwesterly corner of the property belonging to and known as the residence of John W. Hunter, Esq.; from thence along said property lines of John Hunter southerly to the eastern line of the Eastern Boulevard; from thence along said eastern line of the Eastern Boulevard to the southwest corner of lands belonging to J. Furman, Esq.; from thence easterly along the boundary line between the property of said Furman and the lands of Lorillard Spencer and J. M. Waterbury to Long Island Sound; from thence following northwardly the coast line along the shores and waters of Long Island Sound, East Chester and Pelham bays, around and including Pelham Bridge Island and Pelham Neck to the southerly line of the causeway leading to Hunter's Island; thence along said southerly line of causeway to Hunter's Island; thence southerly, easterly, northerly and westerly, and southerly along the shore and waters of the coast line of said Hunter's Island and the small island known as the Twin, following said coast line entirely around said Hunter's and Twin islands to the northerly line of the causeway or bridge leading to the main land from Hunter's Island; from thence along said northerly line of causeway to the shore and water line of the main land; from thence along said main land shore and water line northerly to the place of beginning. Together with all small islands, rocks, etc., situate and lying within a line drawn between the extreme southerly bound herein described and the farthest southeastern projection of Pelham Rock, and between the most easterly point on Pelham Rock and the outermost southern and eastern point of Hunter's and Twin islands; and also including the rocks on the north and east of Hunter's Island known as Pass Rocks. The whole within the above-described boundaries containing about seventeen hundred and fifty-six (1,756) acres. From which deducting the shore road, also the road from City Island through Pelham Neck toward Mount Vernon, also Fordham and Pelham Boulevards and the

Eastern Boulevard between the boundaries, also the right of way of the branch railroad of the New York and New Haven Railroad Company, composing together about fifty-six (56) acres, would leave for park purposes about seventeen hundred (1,700) acres to be purchased if said park is adopted.

Fourth—BRONX AND PELHAM PARKWAY.

All those pieces or parcels of land situate and lying in Westchester county, contained within the following boundary, viz.:

Beginning at the junction of Fordham and Pelham Boulevards with Pelham Bay Park as heretofore described, and on the southerly side line of said Fordham and Pelham Boulevard, a continuous strip of land is taken three hundred feet wide, bounded by said southerly line of the Fordham and Pelham Boulevard and a line parallel to said southerly line of boulevard and three hundred feet distant southerly from said line. The strip of land extending from Pelham Bay Park to the crossing of said boulevard by the Kingsbridge road. From thence a strip bounded by parallel lines four hundred feet apart, extends along said Fordham and Pelham Boulevard to the Boston Post-road in such manner as to allow said boulevard to cross diagonally said strip of land from end to end, viz., between the Kingsbridge road and Boston Post-road; from thence a strip three hundred feet wide is taken on the northerly side of the northerly line of said boulevard and touching it, and bounded by a line parallel to and three hundred feet distant northerly from said north line of said boulevard and extending to a complete junction with the Bronx Park herein described, containing about ninety-five (95) acres, exclusive of cross roads, to be purchased if said parkway is adopted.

Fifth—MOSHOLU PARKWAY.

All that piece or parcel of land, situate and lying in the Twenty-fourth Ward of the City of New York, between two parallel lines six hundred feet distant from each other, connecting Bronx Park with Van Cortlandt Park and located on both sides of and including Middle Brook Parkway, Brook street and a small brook or tributary running through said Middle Brook Parkway and Brook street, as shown by the map of the new system of streets as laid out by the Commissioners of Public Parks, containing about eighty (80) acres, exclusive of opened streets and avenues crossing it, to be purchased if said parkway is adopted.

Sixth—CROTONA PARK.

All those pieces or parcels of land lying and being in the Twenty-fourth Ward of the City of New York, contained within the following boundary, viz.: Beginning at the junction of the northern boundary line of the Twenty-third Ward and the easterly line of Fulton avenue, as

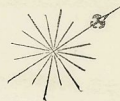
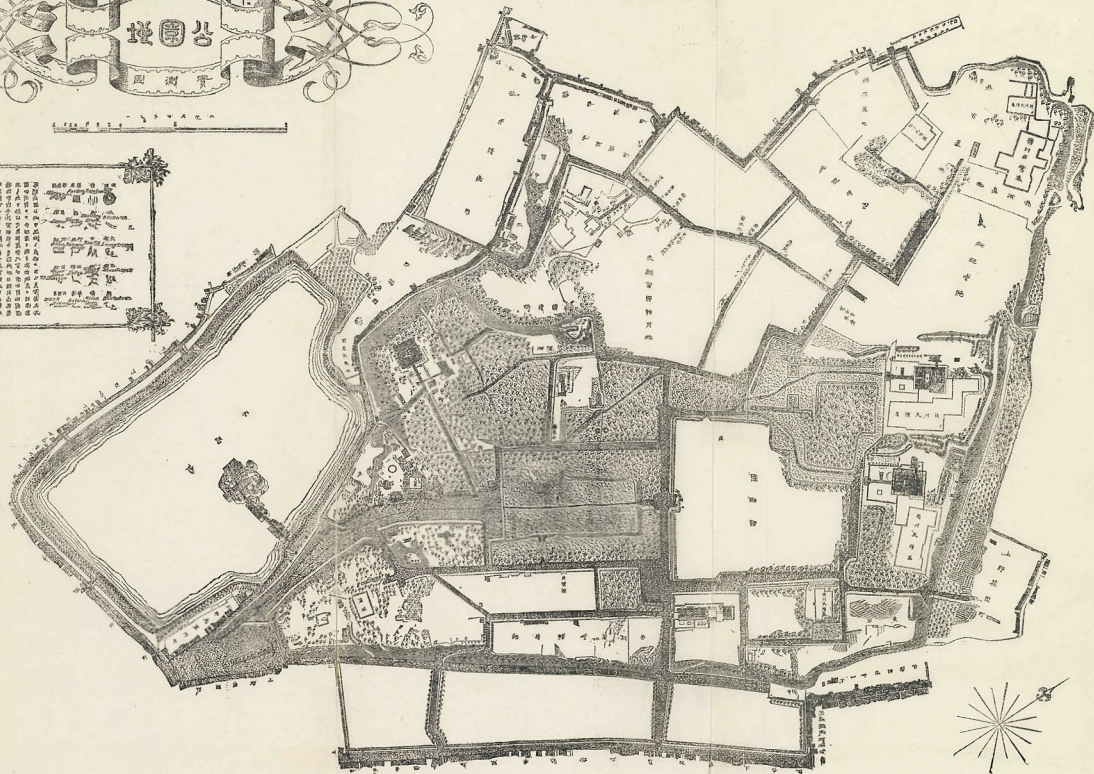
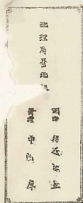
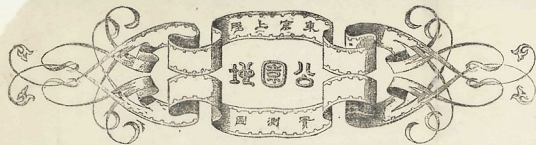
shown on the map of the new system of streets as laid out by the Commissioners of Public Parks; thence eastwardly along said northern boundary of the Twenty-third Ward, crossing Franklin avenue (Broadway), and continuing on said boundary line to a point three hundred and twenty (320) feet westerly from the westerly line of Boston Post road; thence along a line parallel to and westwardly of the said westerly line of Boston Post-road, and distant therefrom three hundred and twenty (320) feet to the junction of the Boston Post-road with the Southern Boulevard; thence on a line three hundred and twenty feet westerly and parallel to the westerly side of the Southern Boulevard to a point three hundred (300) feet southerly from the southerly line of Fairmount avenue as shown on said city map; thence westerly three hundred feet distant from and parallel to the southerly line of Fairmount avenue crossing Franklin avenue (Broadway) to a prolongation southerly of the westerly line of Broad street as shown on said map; thence northerly along such prolongation of the westerly line of Broad street, and northerly along said westerly line of Broad street to its junction with the southerly line of Tremont avenue; thence westerly along the southerly line of Tremont avenue to the junction of said line with the easterly line of Fordham avenue; thence southerly along said easterly line of Fordham avenue to the northerly line of One Hundred and Seventy-fifth (175th) street (Fitch street); thence easterly two hundred and eighty (280) feet along said northerly line of Fitch street; thence in a straight line southerly to the place or point of beginning. Containing within the boundaries named about $141 \frac{6.5}{100}$ acres, from which deduct Franklin avenue for its full length within such boundaries, viz.: $6 \frac{3.1}{100}$ acres, leaves to be purchased about $135 \frac{8.4}{100}$ acres if said park is adopted.

Seventh—CLAREMONT PARK.

Also all that certain tract of land situate and lying in the Twenty-third and Twenty-fourth Wards of the City of New York, within the following boundaries: Beginning at a point formed by the junction of the prolongation westwardly of the southerly line of Jane street (old name) with the easterly line of Fleetwood avenue; thence easterly along said prolongation and along the southerly line of Jane street and continuing eastwardly said straight line to its junction with the westerly line of (Grant Place) Elliott street; thence along the westerly line of Elliott street southerly to the easterly line of Fleetwood avenue; thence along the easterly line of Fleetwood avenue to the place of beginning, containing about thirty-eight $\frac{9.5}{100}$ acres, to be purchased if said park is adopted.

Eighth—ST. MARY'S PARK.

Also all those certain tracts of land situate and lying in the Twenty-third Ward of the city of New York within the following



MAP OF WOYENO PARK, CITY OF TOKIO, JAPAN.

boundaries, viz. : Beginning at a point formed by the intersection of the southerly line of St. Mary's avenue and the easterly line of St. Ann's avenue ; thence northerly along the easterly line of St. Ann's avenue to the southerly line of One Hundred and Forty-ninth street ; thence along the southerly line of One Hundred and Forty-ninth street easterly to the westerly right-of-way line of the Port Morris Branch Railroad Company's property ; thence southeasterly along said westerly line of railroad right of way to the easterly line of a street forming a southerly extension of Robbins avenue, as shown on a map of the new system of streets as laid out by the Commissioners of Public Parks ; thence along the easterly line of such street, extending southerly from Robbins avenue, about one hundred and fifty (150) feet ; thence westerly and in a straight line to a point in the southerly line of St. Mary's street, distant about thirty feet northerly and at right angles to the northerly line of One Hundred and Forty-third street ; from thence along the southerly line of St. Mary's street westerly to the point of beginning, containing about twenty-eight and $\frac{7}{10}$ acres, from which is to be deducted Passage avenue for its full length within the bounds mentioned, containing about three $\frac{45}{100}$ ($3 \frac{45}{100}$) acres, leaving to be purchased about twenty-five $\frac{35}{100}$ ($25 \frac{35}{100}$) acres if said park is adopted.

Ninth—CROTONA PARKWAY.

Also all those pieces or parcels of land contained in a strip one hundred feet wide : Beginning at the junction of the Southern Boulevard with the Bronx Park, at Kingsbridge Road crossing, thence southerly along the easterly side of the Southern Boulevard, and parallel with and touching the same, a strip of land one hundred feet wide, as an addition to the width of said Boulevard, said strip to continue southerly, and of its full width of one hundred feet to a point one hundred feet south of the southerly line of Fairmount avenue, from thence westerly widening Fairmount avenue on its southerly side by a strip one hundred feet in width, to a point one hundred feet westerly of the northeasterly corner of Tremont Park, and at right angles northerly from said northeast corner of park aforesaid ; from thence in a straight line parallel with said right angle two hundred feet in width, touching the park and the street running easterly of the park containing about twelve acres, to be purchased if said Boulevard enlargement is adopted.

All of these descriptions of Parks, Parkways and Boulevard enlargement, substantially as laid out upon the Sketch Map of the City of New York and vicinity, showing the sites of and approaches to the parks selected and located by the Commission appointed under chapter 253 of the Laws of 1853, as submitted herewith, and dated New York, January 7, 1884.

Very Respectfully,

JAMES C. LANE, C. E.

